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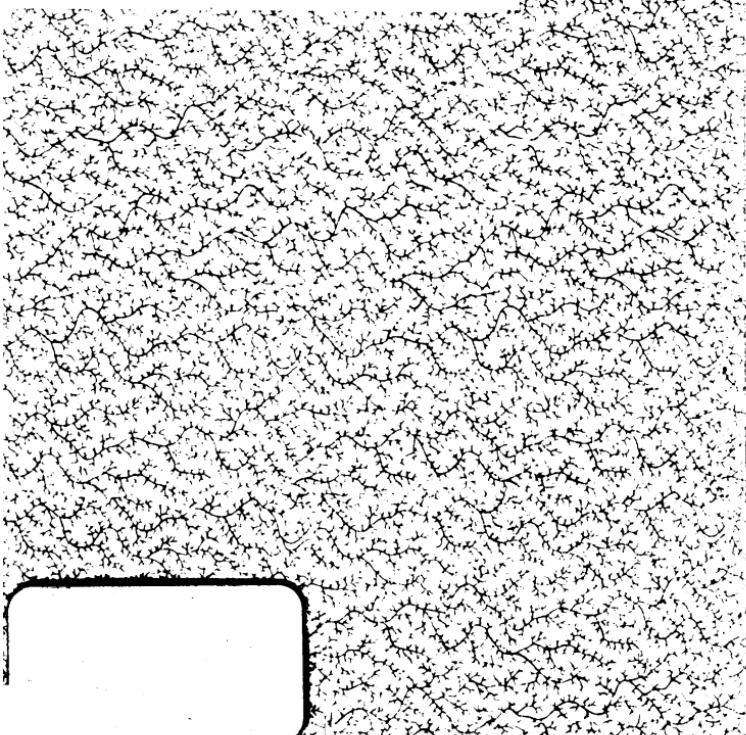
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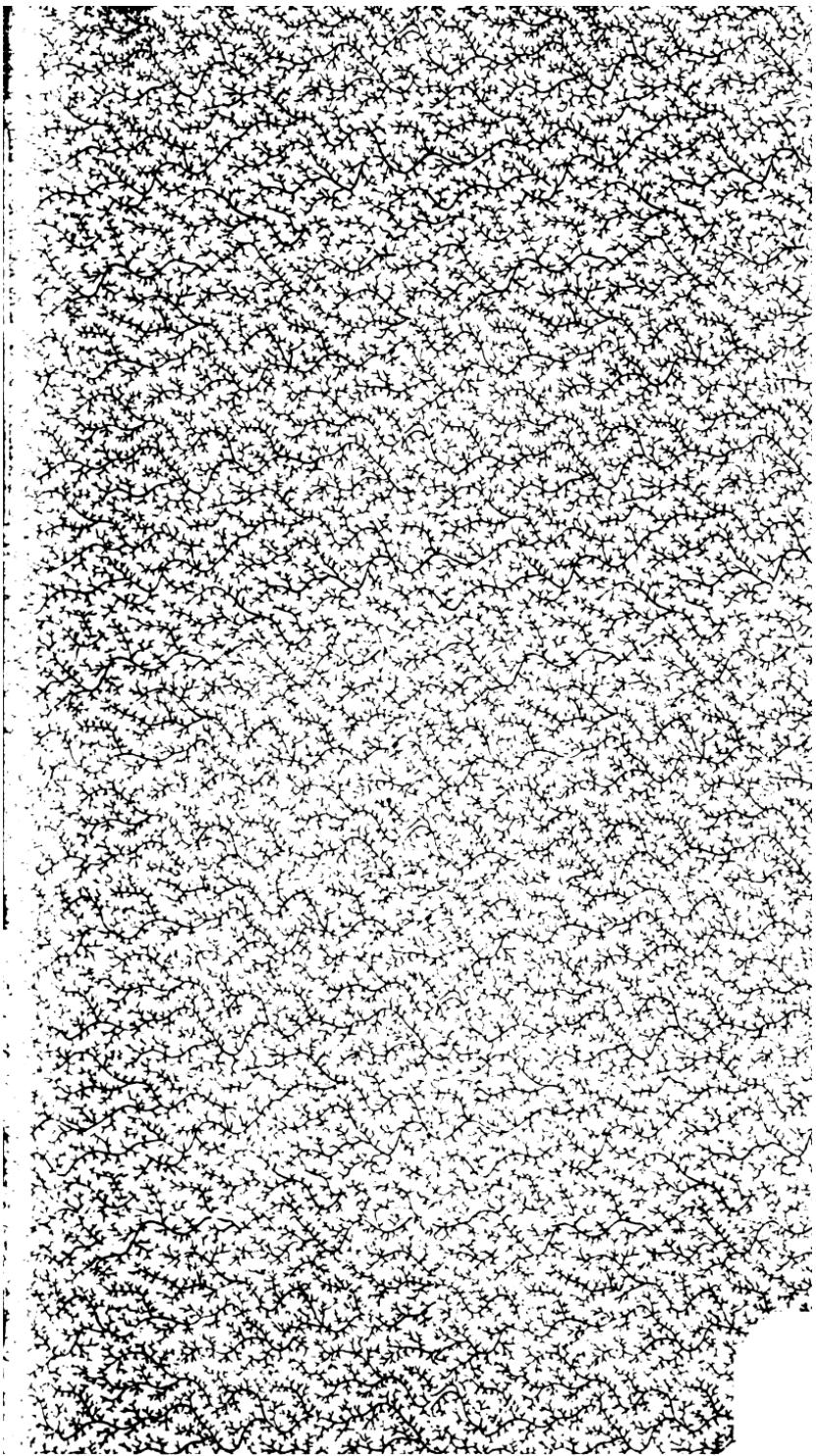


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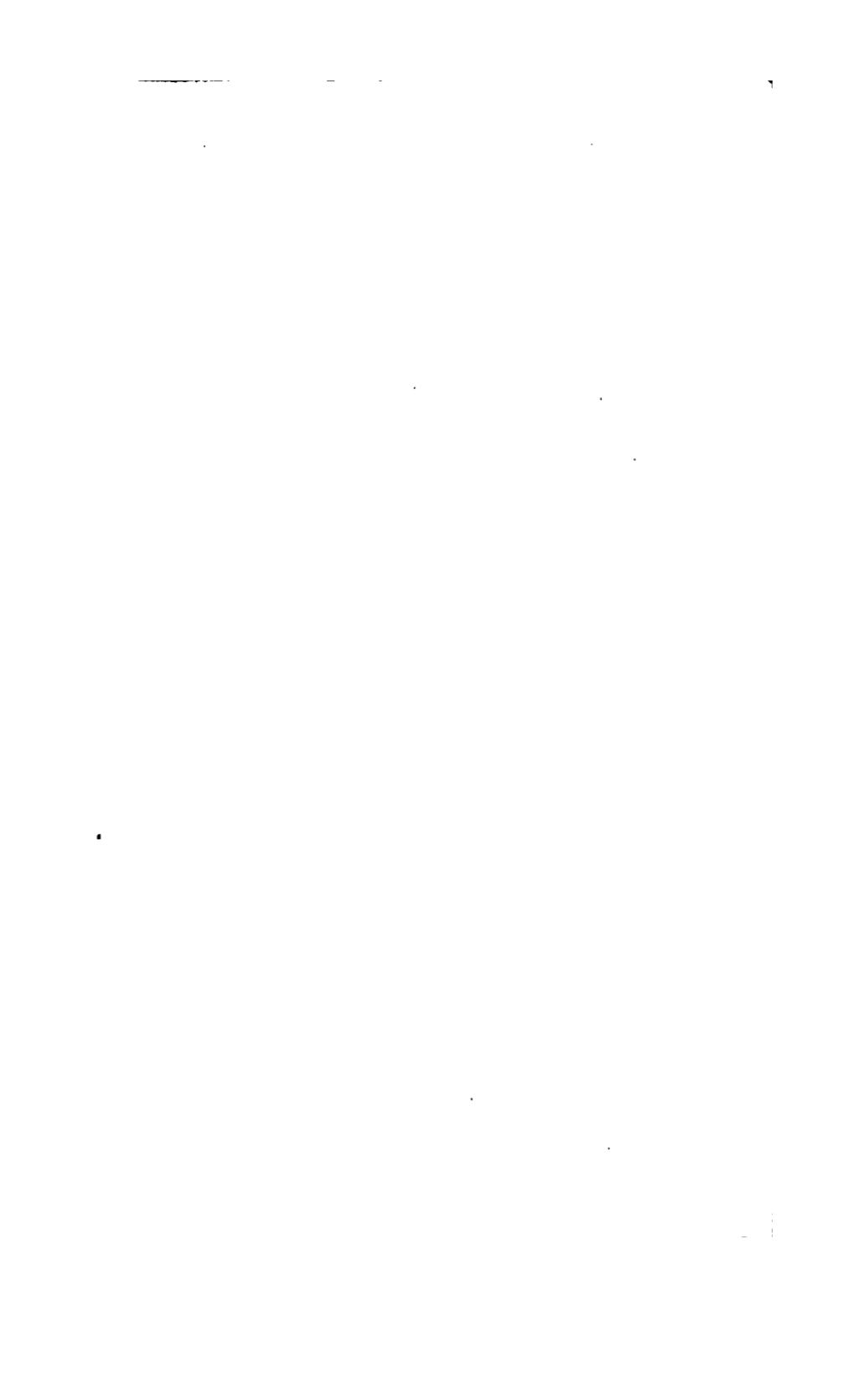


T. B. M. Mason.













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PLEBEIANS
AND
PATRICIANS.

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BY

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"There is a history in all men's lives."
Shakespeare.

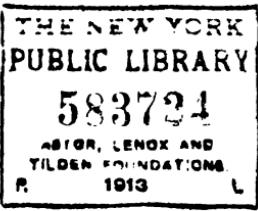
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. (*only*)

PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY & A. HART.

—
1836.

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PLEBEIANS AND PATRICIANS.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY CHANGES—THE MANFORDS.

"Tis a world of changes,—
And whether up or down—the change is irksome."
Anonymous.

FORTY-EIGHT years ago, the parish of Shawton, forming one of the north eastern extremities of Cheshire, was as beautiful and picturesque in its appearance, as the most enthusiastic lover of nature could desire. The summer sun shone down upon it, and upon its quiet cottages and comfortable farm-houses, undimmed, save by a few silvery clouds; and the birds, the streams, and the trees waved and sung in the bright sky, with nothing near them to mar their beauty.

In one of these farm-houses the family to which our story refers were, on the 2d of July, 1784, assembled in deep and anxious consultation. They had just returned from attending the last rites of their protector and father, John Manford, or, as he was more generally called "Honest John." He had died full of years, and at a right time for his own comfort, though at a very wrong one for that of his family; which consisted of a wife, three sons, and two daughters.

Hitherto the Manfords had been looked upon as

the chief people of their immediate neighbourhood. The old man was the descendant and representative of a line of highly respectable yeomen; a class which had sprung into notice and wealth by the breaking up of the feudal tenures, and the confiscation of property in the reign of the Tudors. This had been farther helped forwards by the dissolution of the monasteries, and by the wars of the Reformation. In his sphere of life he had been wealthy, possessing several small freehold estates, besides the Shawes, on which he lived.

But John Manford had outlived his means, and this too without being at all aware of it. Like others of his class, his style of house-keeping had been profusely liberal. Hospitality was not then considered as a virtue, but as a thing of course; and the open house, and the well-furnished table welcomed the wayfarer, come from what quarter he might.

This, however, would not have signified much, as his means were ample, had there been any thing like domestic thirst; but there was not—and Manford, never having felt the want of money, knew nothing of its value, and had not troubled himself about annual balances, or profit or loss in any shape. Thus it happened that his income was never stored up, there was enough for to-day, and why should there not be enough for to-morrow, and so the old man died full of years—and full of honour.

Still this would not have led to harm; it was Manford's reputation for honesty that had ruined his family. At that time provincial and national banks were not to be found in every town and village. These conveniences were but little known, and still less esteemed by our bold yeomanry, and hence "Honest John," had become banker-general for the district. Whoever had money to spare, it

was straight-ways placed in his hands, with a mere memorandum, or in many cases without any voucher whatever.

A considerable sum became invested by this means in his hands; he had no commercial use for it, and as he was implicitly trusted, he converted it into a source of household festivity; money was always coming in, and in place of examining his own resources, and confining his expenditure within the prudential line, he unscrupulously availed himself of this trust-fund; and thus, year after year had flown away, and "Honest John" had lived and enjoyed himself, and was considered as the most respectable man in the parish.

At the time of his death, his affairs had of course to be looked into, and it was found that a long course of carelessness had done its work; notice being given for the purpose, a host of persons, who had placed money in "Honest John's" hands, made their appearance, and an amount was soon ascertained to be due to them which made the family almost pennyless. Land did not then sell as it has since done, and when all was valued and disposed of but the Shawes, this was their sole resource.

The blow was a sad, and certainly an unmerited one to the widow and children. The Shawes too had been left to John, the eldest son, other property being assigned to the rest of the family, so that their prospects were gloomy enough—none of them had been accustomed to work, and there were no means within their reach of obtaining a livelihood.

John, the present head of the family, was the child of the late Mr. Manford's second wife, whom he had married—for what end nobody, as is usual, could conceive. She had been a defendant on his first spouse, as half companion, half slave; and, though very pretty, was, to some extent, simple and idiotic. He had, however, loved her fondly;

and on her premature death, had transferred his affection to her child. This was called after himself—John, and soon gave signs that he inherited, to some degree, his mother's intellectual imbecility.

Nevertheless, he grew up a strong lad, and the darling of his father, who made him his constant companion. Little Johnny, as he was called, although showing unequivocally his mental defect, in his speech and countenance, was, in many things, singularly shrewd and penetrating. He soon learned the value of money, which he hoarded with the care and secrecy of an experienced miser. He was also oddly persevering, and had a quickness in discovering character rather remarkable. He had, however, a most sovereign contempt for clothing, and it had required all his father's care and authority to make him wear either coat or hat. His ideas of decency in manners were also very slight; and had it not been for the kindness and attention incessantly paid to him, he would have sunk into absolute idiotism.

This character had grown with his growth, and with all his defects on his head, he was now the principal man in his paternal home. With the utmost generosity he at once offered to divide with his brothers and sisters the sole remnant of property vested in himself. But even this did not satisfy the desires of the younger brothers.

So long as their father had lived, all in the house had gone "merry as a marriage bell," and the different and conflicting elements of which the family was composed, consisting of the children of three wives, had been kept in order.

The old man had lived in undisputed authority, and had, moreover, a very sufficient opinion of himself, which his children had never dreamt of disputing; his power over them had been omnipotent. But he was gone, and the binding link

was removed. Poverty and approaching distress are also bad family counsellors ; so that a few days made it quite obvious that some change was at hand.

It was on the day on which our tale opens that things had come to a crisis: the family had met to think over and arrange their shattered affairs ;—but bitter words were spoken against Johnny, a stormy quarrel followed, and eventually two of the brothers left the house in anger, with a determination of seeking their fortunes elsewhere.

The family, thus left, consisted of John, Mrs. Manford; still a youngish woman, one daughter of her own, one daughter of a former wife, and a younger brother.

Nothing was now to be done, but to make the best of their means. The farming of his patrimonial acres was, indeed, likely to be a poor resource—but there was no other. John and his brother worked hard; two cows were added to the stock, and the strictest economy practised within doors.

After a short time the sisters joined their labours to those of their brothers. At first they hung back, a flash of natural pride making them unwilling to sink down into occupations, the drudgery of which they had been used to superintend, but never to share in. There was, however, no choice—the female servants were dismissed ; they milked the cows, made butter and cheese, and one of them had the fortitude to appear regularly at market.

After this, things went on better; the females employed themselves, at their leisure hours, in spinning : the distaff and the wheel were busy night and morning, and by great efforts they managed, amongst them, to earn just enough to keep them fairly above want.

Shawe House, a mansion of considerable size, and respectable in appearance, was undergoing

changes in unison with the diminished fortunes of its inmates. It was one of those half-house, half-castle-like mansions, built at once for residence and for defence in times of need. Its walls were massive, with narrow windows and loop-holes, and it harmonized well with the general features of the landscape, and with the noble oaks which surrounded it.

In the time of the father, the house had been kept in excellent repair. The large hall, occupying the lower part of the building, had been a scene of eating, drinking, and merry making; and scarcely a day passed without witnessing some jollity,—when the

“quip and crank, and wreathed smile”

were mingled with the loud song, and the noisy chorus; when the seniors sat in pleasant mood, quaffing their nut-brown October, and the young people amused themselves with rustic pastimes, the very names of which are already nearly forgotten.

Now, however, first one huge chimney toppled down, and then another; the hall was filled with flax or cotton, and spinning wheels; and the joyous sports, which it had once witnessed, were gone—and with them the loud laugh, and merry jest.

The friends of the family also withdrew themselves, not so much on account of their altered circumstances, as their feelings and sympathies were too sincere and unsophisticated to permit of such desertion, but the Manfords, who were painfully sensible of their inability to continue their wonted hospitality, separated themselves as quietly as possible from their acquaintances—thus Shawe House and its owners, showed too plainly that they were poor; and that the Manfords had fallen from their high state, and were reduced nearly to a level with the cotters around them.

CHAPTER II.

FARTHER CHANGES—THE FIRST FACTORIES.

"Men's fortunes result from accident or observation."
Temple.

Such was the state of things with the Manfords, in the year 1786; their ancient patrimony was gone, and there appeared little or no chance of their emerging from the toil and poverty of their present lot. Events were, however, at work, which in a few years produced no slight change in their condition.

It was about this period that the cotton manufacture received its first grand impulse; the discovery of new, and improved methods of making yarn and cloth, and the high price paid for these, gave a stimulus to this branch of industry, which was working a complete revolution in it. The district of which Manchester might be called the centre, was particularly alert in taking advantage of these improvements, and capital poured into it in consequence, and labourers flocked to it from all quarters. Wealth was acquired by the early manufacturers, as if by magic, and the ointment of the Dervise, in the Eastern tale, was not more potent in the discovery of money, than cotton spinning.

The picturesque country, of which the Shawes formed part, was distant some eight or ten miles from Manchester, and was singularly fitted, by its natural advantages, for the purposes of this manu-

facture. There were plenty of streams, for water-power, coal in great abundance, and a level country extending to several populous towns, affording easy carriage.

At this juncture, a neighbouring proprietor, of the name of Norton, whose property abutted upon the Shawes, and between whom and the Manfords some friendly relations existed, became aware of the advantageous locality of his little property. Norton was a shrewd and calculating man, and accustomed to speculation; and he resolved on trying to improve his fortune by building a spinning mill.

For this purpose, a little plot of ground belonging to Manford was particularly eligible, and Norton was of course anxious to purchase it. As soon, however, as John became aware of his intentions, he asked and obtained a price about ten times its value, and this strongly excited his curiosity.

In a few weeks the shell of Norton's mill was complete, and such as it was, it excited the wonder of the simple rustics. It indeed differed very widely from the splendid structures which have since been built for the same ends, and from none more strikingly, than from that which now stands upon its site. However, it looked imposing when compared to other buildings near it, and was pretty accurately described by Jingling Johnny, the poet Laureate of the parish, in the following exquisite dogrel:—

"It's twenty yards long, and ten yards wide,
It's two stories high, wi' cellars beside,
It's forty window's, one above t'other,
And belongs to Jack Norton, Dick Norton's brother."

No one watched the progress of Norton's mill more closely than John Manford, he had plenty of spare time ~~out~~ of his hands, and day after day, he

might be seen scanning, with anxious eyes, its buildings and its machinery. He possessed no mechanical genius, but he had sense enough to perceive the general principles governing the whole; and when all was complete about it, he considered it the summit of human invention.

Neither did his mental failing prevent him profiting by the example set him by Norton. He cleared out the old hall, and with the money he had received for his land, he purchased several machines, on which he set himself and his sisters to work, and, although he could not compete with his neighbour, he got money fast, and soon began to contemplate building a mill himself,—this being the very acmè of his ambition.

Industry, economy, and immense profits, soon placed him in a position to put the darling wish into execution, he built his mill, and this being done, the Nortons and the Manfords became the great people of their immediate neighbourhood.

Manford was now on the high road to wealth; and for a considerable period little deserving of record marked his career. Riches produced their usual effect in altering their style of living, and brought them into contact with some of their more aristocratic neighbours.

Several years after the erection of the mill, the sun was shining with the same splendour, on a glorious day in June, over the same landscape to which our readers were introduced in the first chapter. Then we had seen it a beautiful and secluded spot, rich in rural sights and sounds, and basking in quiet repose. There were copses, hedge-rows, and trees covered with foliage, meadows waving with grass and flowers, brooks wimpiling and glancing in every ravine—and above all was a bright and clear summer sky.

Now the whole scene looked as little like its for-

mer self, as if an evil genius had waved his wand over it. Instead of its quiet and serpentine lanes, winding about in utter contempt of regularity, and without any regard for hill or hollow, two broad and level turnpike roads intersected it from north to south, and from east to west. The scraggy hedges on either side were shrouded in dust, raised by the continual rolling of carts, waggons, and stage coaches. The venerable and patriarchal-looking farm-houses, which had peeped out from groves of oak or sycamore, were gone, and they had been replaced by at least a dozen huge brick buildings, with lofty chimneys vomiting clouds of dense and black smoke.

To each of these were attached groups of grimy-looking cottages; but there was scarcely a single green field to be seen. Heaps of refuse coal and cinders piled up on all sides, with the thundering sound, and babel-like clamour proceeding from the working of several steam engines, and the half-clad, and pallid creatures who were seen flitting about, forcibly pourtrayed a pandemonium, rather than a spot on God's earth fitted for human habitation.

Not a vestige of Shawe House now remained. On the right stood a mansion, overlooking a sooty mass of buildings, and having some pretensions to architectural taste; its structnre was plain, but regular and extensive, and a portico of stone, forming the front entrance, gave a relief to its general unpretending character. A gothic lodge, sadly out of keeping, with the appearance of the house, stood by the road side, about two hundred yards in advance, and gave admission to grounds laid out in plots of ornamental shrubbery, close shaven lawns, gravelled walks, and rustic trellis-work, all arranged in the most modern and approved manner, and in scrupulous good order.

A handsome range of detached offices, screened

from the main building, by a group of well-grown arboraceous shrubs, joined to the general aspect of the place, afforded abundant proof that the owner was wealthy. The only discrepancy visible, was the locality, so that the observer came at once to the conclusion, that the house and its appurtenances belonged to the proprietor of the adjacent works; common sense exclaiming, that nobody else was likely to locate such a building, in such an infernal looking neighbourhood.

On taking a wider view over the country, several residences of a very similar appearance were seen; each of these also overlooked a similar group of inferior buildings. With the exception of these verdant spots, there was hardly a trace of the green face of nature to be seen; brick fields, collieries, mills and cottages, forming a continuous layer.

CHAPTER III.

THE DINNER.

"Julia—'Is it dinner time?'
Lucetta—'I would it were.'"
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

In the house first pointed out, dwelt the Mansfords. Wealth had produced some of its usual consequences, and they were no longer the people we have before seen them. Mrs. Mansford and her daughters were seated in a magnificent drawing-room, most superbly furnished and decorated, with many splendid articles of curiosity and vertú. The low, dingy, and coarse apartments of Shawe House were forgotten, and it required some stretch of imagination to fancy this family sitting and moving in a domicile of so different a description as Factory Hall. Yet, here they were most surely: the dresses of the ladies were in keeping with the room, rich and fashionable; and if there was nothing of the ~~the~~ and bien-seance of good society to be remarked in them, neither was there any thing of that exceedingly coarse rusticity, which a few years before had harmonized so well with the rude roof-tree of their paternal mansion.

Mrs. Mansford was at this time grown into an oldish woman, but hers was a green old age. Her figure was plump, her face rosy, and her grey hair, being combed back and hidden by a decent wig, with a few well-managed curls peeping from under her matronly, though smart cap, gave her alto-

gether a really pleasing look. Her daughters were dressed in the first style, and though none of them were very young, they looked well, and much more juvenile than the registry of their births in the family bible would have borne out.

"Well," said Mrs. Manford, "I wish this Sir John Scarsbrook would come—here we are waiting dinner at half-past two, and sitting not knowing what to do with ourselves."

"Well mother, never mind," answered one of the daughters, "you know we took care to get something into our insides, at one o'clock; I'm not a bit hungry, and I don't care if the man don't come for an hour."

"Lork, Phœbe," said another of the polished party, "how thee does talk to be sure, why I'm all in a frustration; folks say, Sir John is so impudent!"

"And if he be," said Phœbe, "I know one that can match him, I should like him to try his impudence on wi' me."

"Well Phœbe," continued her mother, "you must mind your P's and Q's with him. They say his sister, Lady Lucy, and the Earl are coming to the Hall, and may be they'll ask us to some of their grand parties."

"I don't care much about it," said Phœbe, "we've plenty 'o folks 'bout 'em."

The conversation ran on in this strain for some time, and was only interrupted by the sight of a carriage driving at a rapid rate through the gates. The female Mansfords, notwithstanding their assumed lady-like composure, were as the mother said, "all in a twitter!" Their expected guest was of far higher rank than any individual they had as yet associated with, and like all rich vulgar people, their notions of the "quality," as they called them,

made them uneasy, when about to be brought into contact with one of them.

On seeing the carriage, therefore, they were no little flurried, all but the indomitable Phœbe, one of those coarse minded women, whom nothing touches nor daunts. She very civilly compared her mother and sisters to so many "hens in egg," a felicitous comparison we are bound to suppose, because it tickled the fancies of the manufacturing ladies to a wonderful degree, and procured her a compliment from her mother, in this shape, "thou'rt a rare wench, Pheebe." At this moment Sir John was announced, by their awkward footman.

The ladies rose and blushed, and their visitor having shook hands with Mrs. Manford, and bowed individually to the daughters, said—

"I must apologize, my dear Mrs. Manford, for having delayed your dinner, but, the fact is, my sister arrived at Vale Hall just as I was stepping into the carriage, and detained me for a short time. But where is my friend Mr. Manford?"

Luckily, at this moment, our old friend, Johnny Manford was seen approaching from the factory, and in the excess of their good breeding, the three female Manfords rushed one and all from the room, no doubt to notify to John, the presence of Sir John.

When Manford made his appearance, he presented most of the traits we have noticed at an earlier period of his life; his person was indeed stouter, and his outward man improved. His countenance though still the same was yet different;—acquired importance, and intercourse with the busy world had softened down some of its most prominent idiotic characteristics, but the expression remained in a great measure unaltered.

There are but few people who behave with any

grace at dinner; whether the act of eating be in itself ungraceful, or whether the artificial restraints imposed on society, by the arbitrary goddess of fashion, make dinner an awkward meal, so most undoubtedly it is. If a man or woman sit down positively hungry, the case is improved, as the instinct of hunger proves an overmatch for factitious delicacy. On the present occasion, the truth of the foregoing axiom was strikingly illustrated, when all the parties, save John and Sir John, had already got "something in their insides."

Talking not being an essential requisite, very little was said, beyond, an occasional remark from the baronet to his host. The young ladies handled their forks clumsily, and the lady-mother drank too much wine. After a while this imbibition, joined to two stout glasses of brandy and water, which she had previously drank to keep up her appetite, made her eloquent in her hospitable attentions, and this too, when her guest was becoming satisfied with his good cheer.

"Try another piece of duck, Sir John—it's one I fed myself—and plucked too—the servants tug and tear them so, I always dress 'em myself—let me help you, you see it's as brown as a berry, and as tender as marrow."

Sir John courteously declined the proffered morsel.

"Taste another slice of lamb, then, Sir John; Jem Ward, the butcher, swore it was a real Downshire one, and put on a halfpenny a pound—I told him, that wasn't I expecting you, I'd have eaten nails, sooner than be done by him."

Again Sir John bowed, and declined.

"Do take a bit more of the stewed tench," continued the indefatigable hostess, "it's a charming fish; I eats them myself since they cleared the pit

of dead cats and dogs, that the factory lads had thrown in."

And so on, through a well-filled table,—Mrs. Manford recommending each dish by some piquant remark of a similar nature to the above, and her guest as punctually declining.

The meal, however, like other mundane troubles, had at last an end, and a choice and varied selection of early fruits was placed before them. The young ladies were more at ease in cracking nuts, and swallowing grapes, and in whispering their thoughts, as they sat gathered together in a close knot. Mrs. Manford, now in her altitudes, and with a face gloriously illuminated, amused her visitor with a spirited and graphic account of her household appurtenances; such as the number of her servants, the colours of her carpets, and various other highly interesting details. Sir John, who was a well-bred man, and a man of the world, listened very patiently to an amusing edition of Mrs. Malaprop, till John Manford, pulling out his watch, intimated to him, that his time was nearly up, as he called it; and that he must be off to the mill shortly.

The ladies on this hint withdrew, and the gentlemen were left to their wine and their business.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MANUFACTURER AND THE BARONET.

“Sometimes nature will display its folly,
Its tenderness: and make itself a pastime
For harder bosoms.”

Winter's Tale.

It will hardly be supposed that a man of Sir John Scarsbrook's rank and character would be found at the table of the plebeian Manford, either from idle curiosity, or to indulge in friendly association. The following conversation will throw some light upon the position of the parties.

“I have,” said the baronet, “as you are aware, occasion for money, and have come to the resolution of disposing of the Shortwood's estate; my agent tells me, you have spoken to him on the subject, as the property is contiguous to your own, and as you are aware, there is abundance of coal and stone under it.”

“Why, aye,” answered John, “I ha' looked it over, and should never heed buying it; but I'll ne'er give the upshot price of fifteen thousand pounds for it.”

“What, Mr. Manford, a man like you, rich enough to buy my whole lordship, stand haggling about the price?—you know its well worth the money to you.”

“Why, as to that, I've worked hard for my money, and I sha'nt let it slip through my fingers very easily; I'll not deny that Shortwood's may be worth

the money to me, but then nobody else will give you half the money for it, and why should I?"

"Probably at this juncture nobody will, but how long will it be, before it is of the same value to your neighbours as to yourself? You are a shrewd man, Mr. Manford, and to my certain knowledge, that plot of ground you purchased from me last year, has repaid you a hundred fold."

"May be—may be—but I'll tell you at a word what I'll do—I'll give you the price, if you'll fling in the timber you've fallen."

"The timber! why it's worth a thousand pounds. However, to bring matters to a close, I shall take your terms, I want the money for special purposes, and I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I feel under considerable obligations to you in that affair with Norton."

"Well, I'm quite agreeable Sir John, the title's clear and short, and as there's no incumbrance, except my own small mortgage, the deed won't cost much."

"I envy much the equanimity, Mr. Manford, with which you make the purchase. Compelled to some extent, in consequence of my own folly, to part with a moiety of my own property, I could have wished it had been any other but Shortwood's. My boyish days were passed there, I have many delightful reminiscences connected with it, and I know that your persevering industry, and extensive resources will soon convert its sylvan retreats, and rich inclosures into a barren desert, sacrificing the surface for the sake of making its mineral wealth available to your purposes."

"It's very likely, Sir John," answered Manford; and in a few minutes the baronet was rolling home in his carriage, and the manufacturer was counting cobs.

As Sir John Scarsbrook drove through the beau-

tiful estate of Shortwood's, on his return to Vale Hall, feelings of a very bitter character filled his mind, that he should have dismembered his noble patrimony, by its sale. The devious and winding road, along which he passed, and which had been made by his father, as a private drive for himself, through the most charming part of his property, brought back to him the sunny days of his childhood. Not a dell, eminence, nor ravine, but was endeared to him by some cherished remembrance, and when he reflected that the next time he might visit it, all these endearing records would be swept away by the ruthless hand of gain, that the smiling and breathing landscape, with all its natural and adscititious loveliness would be ruined and defaced ; he felt that he had been guilty of a species of profanity, in thus sanctioning the desecration of one of nature's most splendid and glorious temples.

By his direction the carriage proceeded slowly, as it entered a picturesque ravine, the sides of which were composed of old red sand-stone. The depth was not great, but the utmost care had been taken to make it one of the most beautiful pathways the eye of man ever rested upon. The spaces between the broken masses of rock had been planted with trees and arborescent shrubs, wherever the hand of nature had not been at work, and she had not been idle in adorning the romantic and sequestered spot, lichens mosses, and wild flowers, had been disposed with a rare taste in their proper localities ; and now, when seen in a flood of mellow light, when every tree, shrub, and flower, was clothed in beauty, the whole place seemed a very paradise of natural beauties.

This was a spot endeared to Sir John by a thousand fond memories. In a part of the glen, where its walls receded, and left a plot of level ground, was now visible a miniature cottage, over-shadow-

ed by a few noble oaks. Tears swam in his eyes as he gazed upon it, for here had dwelt the object of his first and ardent love. Mary Turner, was a sweet and delicate girl, with downy cheeks, hazel eyes, and long dark eye-lashes, and before her, his young heart had laid its first tribute of affection. Of humble origin—and of spotless purity—and without guile or selfishness, the fair girl had loved him in return, with all the devotedness of truth and simplicity; and it was to their joint labours that the ravine owed its charms.—Mary had died in her young beauty—and though time had done much to efface, or bury Sir John's grief, there were moments, when the remembrance of the happy days he had passed with her came over him with uncontrollable power.

One of these moods, deepened by other causes, was now upon his spirit. "How vain." he murmured, "how intangible are man's most cherished hopes and wishes. How like a child he pursues, with panting breath, the painted butterfly of his imagination,—trampling down in his eagerness, hundreds of fair things, and neglecting his own safety. And after all—after his blind and mad career, should he succeed in seizing the object of his pursuit, he crushes and destroys it in his eager grasp, and is left to mourn over the mutilated relics of his ruined anticipations. Strange, that youth should plant, and till and create a paradise, to be blighted by the passions of the man!—that it should rear temples and fanes, consecrated by the pure worship of its unsullied soul, to be wasted and overthrown by the darker superstitions of riper age. Even this, the most cherished home of my boyhood, the hallowed haunt of the sweetest being that ever visited God's earth—the very ground consecrated by her daily walk—I have sacrificed for follies, which make my cheek blush and my heart ache when I think of them. And now, all will be

destroyed—all overturned; and it will present but too true an index, in its blackened and scorched surface of my own early aspirations, ruined, shattered, and reduced as they are to shapeless fragments, by the volcano of mis-directed passion. Better that it should be so; better that no material trace should remain, of a scene whose pure loveliness and sacred associations conjure up so many futile regrets, and recal thoughts and imaginings that render the dull reality of life hateful and burdensome."

Thus meditating, and soliloquizing, Sir John Scarsbrook reached Vale Hall, gloomy and dispirited, after a drive of six or eight miles.

CHAPTER V.

THE NOBILITY.

If Dryden's definition—

"That the nobleman is he whose noble mind
Is filled with inborn worth."

be correct, then was Sir John Scarsbrook truly noble. He was the present representative of a very old Cheshire family, and derived his descent from Anglo-Norman ancestors; these had received grants of several manors, in the reigns of the first Henries, in the "Vale Royal" of England. Their possessions had come down to him almost in a direct line: and though they had undergone the mutations incident to property in general, he found himself, at the death of his father, owner of a noble patrimony.

The late baronet had been a man of somewhat singular habits. Though he was connected with some of the first families in the kingdom, he had, on the demise of his wife, withdrawn himself in a great measure from society, and lived in comparative seclusion at the Hall. He had possessed a fine taste for natural beauties, and had expended large sums in converting that estate and the adjacent one of Shortwood's into two magnificent park ranges, for which purpose they were admirably adapted. Well educated, and of an intellectual character, he had devoted a large portion of his time to the education of his two children, Lucy and John. They

had benefited greatly by this domestic education, separated as they were, in a great measure, from society, and from the association of children of their own age. At his death, which did not take place till his son had attained his majority, Sir John and his sister had entered freely into the world ; and no two persons ever took their station in it better qualified to play their respective parts.

Sir John Scarsbrook, in addition to a splendid fortune, had every moral and physical requisite for making a distinguished figure on the theatre of life ; and no one could look at him without saying :—

“ I dare be sworn thou art a gentleman,
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,
Do give thee four-fold blazon.”

With a person rather elegant than decidedly manly, a countenance open and intelligent, and a highly cultivated mind, he had noble sentiments, liberal opinions, and a refined mode of thinking which had been fostered by his private education.

His graceful manners made him a favorite with the “ beau sexe,” and many a scheming mother anxiously strove to involve him in the matrimonial mesh ; nor were the daughters themselves at all backward in giving every reasonable encouragement to the rich and handsome baronet. But whether his delicacy recoiled from the obvious baits held out to him, or whether he found the fair ones wanting in the simplicity and maidenly bashfulness which had captivated his heart in the person of Mary Turner, or whether, he had as yet found nothing which came up to his ideal of womanly excellence, certain it is, that at thirty years of age he was unmarried ; and what is more, had not the slightest penchant to any living woman.

His sister Lucy was a very fascinating and very

lovely girl; partaking of her brother's elegance of figure, her stature was lower, and her contour gracefully and beautifully moulded. Intellectually however, she differed widely from him: his bent of mind was of the "pensoroso" cast, hers of sparkling animation, a very "allegro," and smiles,

"Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek,"

were ever to be found, mantling over a countenance as sweet and lovely as an angel's.

Nor was Lucy wanting in the nobler attributes of her brother's character. She was generous, confiding, frank, and without a taint of selfishness. Such a creature had only to be seen and known, to be loved; and she had given her heart and her hand to the Earl of Haggerton, a young nobleman in every way worthy of her. Her fortune was also large; and thus, young, beautiful and married to the man of her choice, the world seemed to her but a vast tableau filled with moving pictures of delight, without a cloud or a fear to darken them.

The family, fortune, and personal advantages of Sir John Scarsbrook had secured him an introduction into the very highest circles of society. He despised many of the conventional forms which so strictly enclosed these; but he was well pleased to find himself ranked as the friend and companion of men whose names were already famous. He found, however, much to condemn, and much that grated harshly upon his finely attuned mind. Profligacy, though shrouded and softened by the halo of fame, was still profligacy, when viewed within its own pale; and riot and debauchery were disgusting to his moral sense, though graced by royalty.

Nevertheless the Circcean link of example led him, spite of himself, into the one then prevailing

error; and that was play—deep and most absurd play. After having moved amidst the brilliant scene for several years, he had the mortification to find his income much overdrawn; and had, in consequence, been forced to submit, in more than one instance, to a species of impertinence, galling and most hateful to his proud and noble spirit.

Sir John had long been disgusted with the senseless and frivolous dissipation of town life; and on finding how it had trenched upon his means, and to what it had subjected him, he withdrew himself, and carried with him, into his retirement, the friendship and good opinion of his associates. He visited Vale Hall, put his affairs into a train of settlement, and resumed his course of mental application.

The mode, however, which he had planned out for liquidating his debts, proved too slow for the patience of some of his titled creditors. Determined to free himself from debt and vexation, he had come to the sudden resolution of selling Shortwoods. Previous to this he had some communication with our plebeian friend Manford. A property, to which he was trustee, had become vested in our acquaintance Mr Norton's hands, and as it was a point on which his honour was concerned, that some arrangement should be made with him, requiring an advance of a sum of money, Manford had been applied to, and had instantly accommodated him. This had led to farther intercourse, and the offer of Shortwoods, and finally to his dining at Factory Hall on the present day.

Plunged in the sad reveries called forth by the nature of his business, and the associations connected with or arising from it, Sir John, on his return, shut himself up in the library to shake off his dejection, before encountering his rattling but affectionate sister. A few turns in it brought to his

aid that moral philosophy which enables a man to reconcile his actions to himself; and he was consoled by the hacknied and universal reflection, that much as he had erred, he was the only sufferer, and should be a wiser and a better man in consequence.

The earl and countess had arrived quite unexpectedly; true they had been threatening to come down, but he had never dreamed they would be as good as their word. Lady Lucy, however, declared that she was wearied out with bustle and late hours; and that she never felt the cold night breeze blowing over her heated cheeks but she had all a woman's longing for green fields, waving trees, and murmuring brooks. This decided the matter, and their large circle of acquaintance was utterly astounded on finding their town-house closed in the beginning of June, and in the midst of a brilliant season. Many surmises were of course afloat upon such an extraordinary event; and the Post, in an article loaded with asterisks, stated, "that a most shocking event had disturbed the whole haut ton. Elopement!—pursuit!—duel!—both killed!—and the unfortunate and beautiful countess dead in convulsions on hearing the dénouement." The blowing up of the Tower, or the loss of a fleet would have excited less sensation than this formidable announcement.

The individuals thus summarily disposed of, were, nevertheless, pursuing heir tête-à-tête journey, by easy stages, towards the north. After a delightful ride, the fifth day saw them safely deposited at Vale Hall, where they were cordially welcomed by Sir John; who, after explaining the nature of his engagement, left them, to amuse themselves in their own way.

He now sought the countess, and found her at her toilette dressing for dinner.

"Welcome, most welcome, my dear brother,"

she exclaimed, on perceiving him,—“Welcome, thrice welcome,—Haggerston and myself, have been wooing the gentle goddess, during your absence; for the Hall with its extreme quietude, after the hurry and noise we have left, seems to be a realization of the Castle of Indolence—for here—”

“There is, I ween, a lovely spot of ground:
And then a season, between June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrown'd.
* * * * *

Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled every where their waters sheen,
That as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a tulling murmur made.””

“And welcome, thrice welcome, my dear Lacy,” said Sir John, putting back her fair hair and kissing her forehead, “and thanks for your quotation—I am glad your long absence has not driven from your head—”

“All the wisdom your wise self put in, John,” playfully interrupted her ladyship,—“be it so, but positively the quiet house, the sighing trees, the hum of bees in the sycamores, and the dashing of the waterfall, have proved a complete lullaby, and I slept, and dreamed that we were again children, rambling in infant glee, amidst grass and flowers, and happy as sinless childhood alone can be.”

“Aye, Lucy,” answered her brother, seating himself beside her, “it is in dreams alone, that we can taste the pure pleasures which we enjoyed in childhood;—now our waking happiness is dashed with other and different feelings, and we wander through the scenes, that were, in themselves, abundant sources of delight, almost unconscious that they surround us, whilst our cares and feelings are utterly at variance with our original dispositions.”

“Hah! hah!” exclaimed the earl, who was stretched on a sofa, and was supposed to be sleep-

ing. "Hah! hah! well done, most melancholy Jaques. 'Did he not moralize this spectacle?—Oh, yes, my lord, into a thousand similes.' Well done, most grave Sir John! Why, it was currently reported in town, that you were turned field preacher, and when I look at your countenance, sad in its expression as an empty opera-box, and listen to your admirable truism, I am led to believe, that if you have not commenced that most edifying vocation, you are at least in training for it."

"Ah, my dear lord! we thought you napping. Trust me, I have just returned from a scene that affords abundant food for moralizing—though, perhaps, not precisely in the vein of melancholy Jaques."

"We shall be glad to be introduced to this same scene, for the drowsy atmosphere of this mansion of yours, has fairly put both Lucy and myself 'hors de combat.'

"You will, I am sure, be gratified and astonished by a visit to the manufactory, not more by the mechanical wonders you will see, than by the character of the individuals connected with them." And he proceeded to relate all that he knew about them—his auditors expressed a wish personally to visit them, and inspect their details, and in a day or two, Sir John forwarded a note to Mansford, with a polite intimation of the pleasure they should have in visiting his mill;—to this a cheerful assent was returned, and ten o'clock the following day fixed for the purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VISIT TO THE MILL—PLEBEIAN IDEAS.

“Custom that doth still dispense
A universal influence,
And make things right or wrong appear,
Just as they do her livery wear.”

Hudibras.

John Mansford having told his mother and sisters, of the intended visit of the noble party, all was immediately in confusion. Not a female tongue in the house but was in active motion, and a continuous clack resounded from kitchen to parlour, from parlour to drawing-room, and from drawing-room to bed-room.

Mrs. Mansford had recourse to her usual and familiar counsellor, the spirit decanter; the daughters scampered up and down, now quarrelling with each other, and then scolding the servants; whilst Jem, who acted alternately as footman, groom, gardener, knife and shoe cleaner, and general factotum, exclaimed—“Dang it, mussus, what’s to be done.”

Now this was precisely the point of difficulty—what was to be done—something they were determined to do to the purpose. An earl and a countess! such people had never visited any body whom they knew, and they felt the importance of the approaching event, and were resolved to make the most of it.

The whole family were at length got together in the hall, and a council of war was held, in which

Jem and the three maid servants had voices; on this occasion, all their household appurtenances were talked over, and a plan of operations agreed upon.

The young ladies laid aside their silk dresses, and, clad in homely bed-gowns, were soon busily at work—one was engaged in the kitchen, making pastry—another in uncovering two splendid beds, which were favourite “lions”—and a third in dusting the “images,” as they called several excellent casts in the hall, and on the different landing-places. Mrs. Manford occupied herself in decanting some half dozen sorts of wine, aided by Jem; whilst the maids were scouring, scrubbing and dusting, as if their very lives depended on their present labours.

This judicious division of labour, as our modern political economists term it, soon showed its effects, and about supper-time all was declared right, and the female Manfords sat down after their hurry to discuss the “coming event.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Manford, “if they’d given us a bit more time, we should ha’ shown ‘em something—as it is, they’ll not find many lords’ houses much better fitted up, I’ve a notion.”

“Aye,” said Phoebe, “why how Lady Haggerton will stare to find a smarter house than her own. It’s my opinion there isn’t a house better fitted up in the world.”

“If we’d only something more in the eating line, I should have been satisfied, but we must excuse it, and say nothing keeps fresh this warm weather,” said another.

“What will the Nortons, the Thompsons, and the Heathes say now!” exclaimed another. “They as made such a fuss about a bit of a captain dining with them—my word, they’ll split with vexation.”

John Manford, who joined them at supper, said but little, and what he did say was any thing but

pleasing to the ladies. He called them "ninnies," for making so much fuss for people who would most likely hardly notice them, and who were too much accustomed to splendour to make any stir about it. This gratuitous piece of information they could not comprehend, and therefore did not believe.

The eventful morning came in due course, and all were a-foot, as Mrs. Mansford expressed herself, at "skrike of day." Ten o'clock came also, and with it came the party, punctual to their time. Greatly, however, to their mortification and surprise, they drove straight to the mill, without ever turning their eyes to the new house.

As this was the first view which the earl and countess had had, of the mechanical wonders of a large cotton manufactory, and of the force and extensive application of the infant steam-engine, their curiosity was amply gratified. They were also much struck by the number of work-people; men, women, and children arranged together; and also by the extreme order and neatness of the whole matériel.

In these respects, indeed, Mr. Mansford's establishment was a model; as he was entirely devoted to business, and had acquired considerable wealth, his pride showed itself in the excellence of his machinery, the fine quality of his goods, the internal economy of his mill, and the best methods of conducting its multifarious details.

Simple as he was in his manners, plainly drest, unostentatious in his display of wonders, some of which were of his own creation, coarse in speech, and of odd, and by no means inviting appearance, the noble party correctly appreciated his character, and both felt and expressed respect for the man, whose energies and perseverance had succeeded in calling into exercise, mechanical inventions, which

had already built up his own fortune, found profitable employment for hundreds of families, and which promised to prove abundant sources of national wealth.

It was also known to Sir John, as an honourable trait in his character, that every man whose ingenuity enabled him to make any new mechanical contrivance, was sure to be rewarded by Manford. He now cheerfully explained, as far as their nature would allow of explanation, all the operations connected with his peculiar manufacture, so that both parties, after an hour spent in the mill, were mutually pleased with each other, the manufacturer by the commendations and polite attentions of the visitors, and the visitors by the plainness and straight-forward simplicity of the manufacturer. A cordial shake by the hand from Sir John and the earl, and many thanks from her ladyship, pleased Manford highly, and the party left the mill much delighted by what they had witnessed.

Meanwhile, all was anxious expectation at Factory Hall. The house overlooked the mill, and every eye had been strained to catch a glimpse of the party, as they moved from one part of the building to another. No sooner was the white hat of the countess seen emerging from the door-way, than the word of command was given, and each individual hastened to occupy the post assigned to him or her, in the approaching scene.

Jem, the footman, was stationed behind the hall-door—one maid servant, with cheeks and arms as red as her crimson top-knot, was placed at the drawing-room door—another at the door of the best bed-room, containing the “lion” bed—and the third had her post at the foot of the stair-case, for no other purpose, as far as she could divine, than to drop a curtsey; Mrs. Manford and daughters stood in a body at the open door of the dining-

room, ready to pounce upon the nobility the moment they made their entrée.

The whole corps d'armée being thus posted, we will take a peep at the other preparations. In the drawing-room was set out a table covered with fruit and pastry, and groaning under a load of decanters—in the dining room stood bread, butter, cheese, cold beef, fowls, together with porter, beer, ale, brandy, rum, and gin, flanked with jugs of hot and cold water, sugar and lemons.

The drive from the mill to the house was somewhat circuitous, and would take up about six minutes. The lodge-keeper, one of the factory workmen, had been specially ordered to throw open the gates to the uttermost, and to stand uncovered, together with his wife and three children, all clad in their best, as the carriage drove past them.

During this necessary interval, therefore, all remained in *statu quo*,—ten minutes—fifteen minutes passed, and every rustle, every murmur of the shrubs waving in the breeze, every audible breathing of the expectant household, were in turn interpreted into the sound of wheels—but as these died away, expectation was kept on tip-toe.

Twenty minutes—every one of the last five having appeared extended much beyond its usual duration; and a whisper arises from the sitting-room—then Jem ventures to peep cautiously out of a side window—and the two damsels above stairs, change their location to the windows; not a trace, however, can be seen of the longed-for vehicle; fearful, however, of breaking up their position, lest some accident might have delayed the arrival of the expected comers, another ten minutes' purgatory was gone through—still no sound met the ear, save the delusive ones already spoken of, and female impatience could hold out no longer. The hall was filled with clamorous parties, each

striving with the other to invent the most plausible excuses for the extraordinary delay, whilst he was despatched post-haste, by a short cut, to the mill, to make inquiries from Manford, with explicit injunctions to keep a sharp look out, and to back as Miss Phœbe expressed it, "like Hey-mad," if he should see the carriage approaching.

He made a speedy return, and reported—"how Master said, as how he know'd nought about it."

This at once opened the sluices of womanly ciferation, and epithets, hardly fit for "ears polite" to hear, broke from mistresses and maids, in an unsparing torrent. The general conclusion of their notwithstanding was—"That more shameful behaviour had never been heard of," and they, one and all, declared—"That they should have blushed to have acted so, that they should."

After this they separated in no very complaisant humour with the nobility, and orders were sent to have the gates closed, and for the keeper to go to his work.

Now the whole of this "untoward affair" arose from the simple fact that the parties did not understand one another. The Manfords, (we mean the females) had a conviction that their house was far finer, and more taking sight than the mill, and that it never, for a moment, entered their heads, that the visit of the noble individuals, would end in looking at factory, people and machinery; whilst, on the other hand, those individuals had never thought of the house, and had no more idea of going there than they had of visiting El Dorado.

When Manford heard of this disastrous history of the "movements," from Jem the footman, with additions and corrections of his own, he was vastly amused; it was just the sort of thing to tickle his fancy, and its comic circumstances were not lost

upon him,—he also hoped, though but faintly, that it might be a lesson to his mother and sisters ; caring himself little about the house, which he had built and furnished, to free himself from their eternal dinning on the subject, he had sense enough to perceive, that there was incongruity between their manners and their residence ; and a large business acquaintance had taught him, that there were some points in their behaviour about it, open to ridicule.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONVERSATION—ANTICIPATIONS.

“A shrewd presaging.”

Shakespeare.

As the noble party were on their return to Vale Hall, the conversation naturally turned upon the scene they had been viewing.

“I consider,” said the baronet, “the adaptation of the recently discovered power of steam, to the wonderful mechanical contrivances, with which the mill we have visited is filled, as one of the most impressive exhibitions of human ingenuity. The extraordinary results as to production, which have already developed themselves, will, if I am not greatly mistaken, effect, before very long, many important changes in our social relations.”

“What surprised me the most, amongst the many curious things we were shown,” said her ladyship, “was the man; apparently, when first looked at, so unfit, so inadequate to be the conductor of an establishment, which must certainly require much mental acuteness to keep in judicious order. Shakespeare has said—

—“There is no art
To read the mind’s construction in the face.”

and certainly Mr. Manford’s face has done much to satisfy me of our great bard’s accuracy; for no face, measured according to the rules of physiog-

nomy—not the physiognomy of the enthusiast Laverter, but the physiognomy of common observation—could offer less prospect of mind."

"Such were my own impressions, Lucy, when he was first introduced to me; nay, I even yet blame myself for the air of palpable astonishment with which I received him, and which I am sure he must have noticed. It then appeared to me an absurdity to enter upon important business, with a man having a countenance so strikingly indicative of mental imbecility. This impression, too, was much heightened, at the moment, by his uncouth manners and coarse speech. But I erred in my estimation of the man; without a single idea, beyond the sphere of his own employment, he has acuteness and quickness of apprehension, and a readiness for seizing upon minute improvements, joined to persevering industry. These have placed him far in advance of his competitors in the same field, many of whom you would not hesitate to pronounce to be far his superiors: not only has he secured a vast fortune to himself, but he has also, I believe, been the means of enabling three or four brothers to do the same; all of whom have mills nearly as large as the one we have been examining."

"There is one consolatory reflection," said the earl, "connected with the subject, and one which tends to satisfy one's pride of self, and that is, the very inferiority of the man, who has done so much for himself, for others, and for his country. Any man, however noble his birth, or vast his fortune, might be proud to have been the originator of such a mass of admirable things as are contained in Manford's mill. I candidly confess, that on the first blush of the matter, I felt humbled that a man owing so little to nature and to accident, should have the merit of superintending and establishing a concern

so magnificent—a magnificence based upon utility—two circumstances rarely combined, but here intimately dependant one upon the other."

"It may be questioned," answered Sir John, "whether a man of more extended views, or of a higher order of intellect, would have been equally successful with Manford. Great men, it has been said, are born for particular epochs; it would, perhaps, be more correct to say, that particular trains of events, which pave the way for such epochs, call into activity, men with qualities and capacities fitted for their direction; though such men, under ordinary circumstances, would remain "unsung by fame." Mr. Manford, though not a great man, is yet a man admirably fitted for encouraging and pushing forward manufacture by steam power. Destitute of imagination, he applies himself to mathematical details, and mechanical contrivances, with unwearying perseverance, without swerving to the right or to the left, and never looking for any thing beyond what may prove accessories to these."

"It is indeed very likely," continued the earl, "that a man of greater talent, of more discursive mind, and of more expanded views, would have done less for the advancement of this branch of industry, than Mr. Manford."

"Experience," said Sir John, "proves this. Since the manufacture has made a decided progress, several gentlemen of fortune and education have embarked in it, and they have, I believe, hitherto, uniformly failed. Look around you, and notice the many extensive mills, large and splendid houses, and vast collieries—these are, without exception, the property of men, the majority of whom are totally illiterate, and sprung from the lower, if not the lowest class of society—and yet these very men or their immediate descendants, will, from the

mere force of wealth, in a very few years, tread upon the heels of our hereditary nobles, and establish for themselves, a new order of aristocracy."

" That you vaticinate rightly, Scarsbook, to some extent, I am willing to believe; that I have thought too slightly of the manufacturers, what I have seen this day has convinced me; that I have ridiculed and condemned their manners, with but an imperfect knowledge of their character, I freely confess; but I shall be slow to give credit to the assertion, that they will, ere long, approximate to, or place themselves side by side with our nobles. As one of the "order," I shall ever hail those admitted within its pale, when such admission is the reward of glorious achievements, or of domestic services. But I do most sincerely trust that mere wealth, without social refinement, will never 'kibe our heels.'"

" Nous verrons, my dear lord, nous verrons.—But what, ma belle Lucy! have we talked you into a fit of abstraction?"

" No, brother, but after having talked so learnedly about these people, you should give us an opportunity of seeing them somewhat more closely, especially as you foretell a sort of fellowship with us—you know we are both admirers of character, and I trust that neither of us are uncharitable."

" With all my heart, Lucy, I am under some obligations to Mansford, and shall always be glad to show him and his family, every civility in my power. In speaking, however, of these men, my lord, as your probable confrères, I believe I may except our friend, as I imagine that were a coronet offered to him he would refuse it, and moreover, that he would do so upon the most proper grounds, namely, that it would not gratify him, and could not aid him in the prosecution of his labours; there are others, indeed, not a whit more polished, and

far less worthy, who, with the vulgar ambition of little minds, would clamber into your Corinthian edifice, by the ladder of wealth—and such is the force of money, that I should feel no surprise to see them hailed as acquaintances by the descendants of our oldest families. You know what Hudibras says—

“Money is the only power,
That all mankind bow down before,”

and don't you think the ‘auri sacra fames,’ is as potential in the higher, as in the lower ranks of society?”

“Forbid it heaven!” exclaimed his lordship, “wealth as a means to an end, is a thing to be desired, but to say that the mere possessor of wealth, the man whose hoards profited the nobler impulses of the human heart, as little as the oaken chest which contained them—to say that such a man was worthy of rank or social estimation, would be to declare that the wooden image, worshipped in the palm-shaded Indian Pagoda, was a thing to be venerated though freed from its sacred and mysterious attributes.”

“There, brother—look there, brother! what an angelic-looking creature,” exclaimed her ladyship, interrupting their conversation, and pointing to a female figure, that stood half concealed by a screen of tall fern by the road side. “Partially seen as she is,” she continued, “she seems a very germ—

—“of purest ray serene.””

The looks of both gentlemen were directed to the point indicated by her ladyship; all they could see, however, was a glimpse of a female figure as it glided away and was lost amongst the hedge-rows.

"What! has our fair sister mistaken one of our buxom hoydens for an eastern Peri?"

"I should rather suppose," said the earl, laughing, "that we had talked her into a state betwixt sleeping and waking, and that as she is 'of imagination all compact,' she had been peopling the beautiful landscape through which we are passing with shepherds and shepherdesses, 'all yclad with flowers,' and, that governed by this train of ideas, the first female form she spied out, at once realized her dreaming fancies."

"Laugh as you please, my two wise friends, you may depend upon it I have just seen a remarkably sweet girl, and one too that I shall endeavour to find out during my hermit life here!" and so the time passed in varied chat till they reached Vale Hall.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOUNDLING—A RETROSPECT.

"This is the prettiest low-born lass, that ever
Ran on the greensward; nothing she says or does
But smacks of something greater than herself,
Too noble for this place."

Winter's Tale.

Seven years before this juncture, John Manford had received an exportation of foundlings from London, in order that they might be employed in his mill. This cruel system of apprenticing young and unprotected beings was then prevalent, and consequently they often underwent the greatest hardships. Many of those which were sent down to Manford were beautiful and interesting children, affording in their physical configuration, and in an undefinable something about them, striking proofs that they were the offspring of the higher classes of society.

Manford's affairs had prospered almost wonderfully, in conjunction with his brothers, and on drawing out a balance sheet, each of them found that he was now rich enough to commence a concern of his own. This they resolved to do, and John offered no opposition to the plan.

As he was making his customary round of inspection, he discovered one of the children, that had arrived a few weeks previous, fast asleep, with its head resting on the frame.—This was an unpardonable offence, as the child ought to have been

tending a long row of spindles and piecing the broken threads.

From her size, the child might be supposed to be ten or twelve years of age—her hair was hanging over her face and neck like a golden shower, one fair cheek was seen shining through it, and the other rested upon her folded hands; she was fast asleep, her little mouth slightly open, and her whole figure had an air of such perfect repose, that Manford paused before he proceeded to inflict the usual punishment. Happily for the beautiful creature Manford's milder mood was upon him and in place of striking her with his baton, he twitched her long curls, but the wearied senses of the sleeping child were not easily roused. By pulling her hands, he at length fairly disturbed her, and as she raised her head her large blue eyes filled with tears, as she saw her dreaded task-master standing over her.

She cast on him one long look of terror, her cheeks and lips became pale, her long fringed eyelids quivered, and a gush of tears obscured their light, like an April mist sailing over the face of the Spring sun.

It was in vain she directed her slim fingers to the broken threads, for her body shrank and cowered in terror, and she kept her eyes fixed on Manford, with that sort of fascination which is said to overcome animals when about to be seized by a rattle-snake. Large tear-drops chased each other down her pallid cheeks, as her supplicating gaze continued; and one should have thought that a demon would not have had the heart to strike the beautiful and terror-bound creature. Manford's hand was, however, raised, but whether moved by the extreme loveliness of the victim, or whether stirred by some other impulse, the instrument of punishment descended without touching her.

Led away by one of those changes in feeling to which men in his moral condition are liable, he now patted the golden head of the fair child, and calling to one of his overlookers, told him to put another hand on the frame; and taking Anne, for such was her name, by the hand, declared she should have a holiday.

The wondering and fearful child followed him passively, still shivering with affright. He led her away to a green and sunny hollow, and seating himself on the greensward, encouraged her to disport herself in the flowery paradise around her. But the tears were yet undried on her cheek, and her little heart palpitated with an undefinable sensation of gladness, so largely mixed with fear, as to prevent her breathing freely. Her companion had been an object of unspeakable terror to her since she had first known him, and a very bugbear in her imagination. She felt, therefore, when in his grasp, much as one may fancy one should feel were we to find ourselves suddenly in a lion's den, and caressed by the savage and untamed animals.

The mind of childhood, however, may be likened to the half-opened sun-flower: when the rain beats, and the storm is abroad this shuts its calyx, shrouds its unripe florets from the passing danger, and hides its brilliant colours; but no sooner is the "eye of day," unobscured by cloud or drift, than one by one its leafy coverings are raised, till the whole of its glittering beauties are exposed. Thus it is with childhood,—when its young spirit has been cowed, and its sensibilities checked and crushed, all its loveliness is buried and lost to the eye. But they are not the less in existence, and are waiting only for the magic touch of kindness, to burst their cement of coldness, and lay bear "fold after fold" the very soul of their beauty and their love.

Thus it happened to the sweet child, which Man-

ford had brought into the bright day and the free air; for a while, as he encouraged her to pluck the tall hare-bell, or the most speckled daisy, she obeyed him but her air was listless and timid. By and by, his kind voice, and the cheering influences of light and pure air, roused her latent feelings; her step became more elastic, her soft eye opened, and she ventured to glance furtively at him, then to smile archly as she laid her flowers before him, and shortly, bringing a bunch of purple clover, she ventured to ask him, if it was not pretty; but her voice was tremulous and low, and still fearful. By degrees, her shyness and doubt quite wore off, and she bounded along the earth like a young fawn, her hair streaming in the breeze, and tossing her arms about, with beaming eye, the living picture of a happy child. At last, she sat down familiarly beside him, and began to prattle to him as freely and unreservedly as if she had known him from earliest perception.

It would be difficult to analyze Manford's feelings during this scene. But when the innocent and trusting child sat down, laid her cheek on his knee, and spoke to him joyously and happily, his hard features softened, and his voice sounded kindly and affectionately in the quiet air. His horny hand was placed upon her head as he answered her numerous questions, as to flowers, grass, birds and trees, for to her every thing was new, as her life had been passed within stone walls, and she had never known the luxury of wandering at will.

Anne never again entered the mill, as Manford, from that time forward, evinced a strong partiality for her. Wherever he went, the little maiden was seen trotting by his side. He took her home, intending that she should reside there, but in this his kind intentions were thwarted by the ill-nature of his mother and sisters.

No sooner was his back turned indeed, but these coarse women tormented poor Anne, by a series of wanton and unprovoked troubles. Questions, the meaning of which she was ignorant of, harsh epithets, and injurious allusions, provoked the little foundling's temper, and no sooner was this noticed, than it was seized on as an excuse for punishing her, or shutting her up in the cellar. In short, they hated the child, because it engrossed Manford's time and love, and means of torment were, therefore, never wanting.

Anne's quaking voice, and her earnest entreaties to accompany him, soon taught him that something was wrong, and a few inquiries put him in possession of the facts of the case. Though much vexed, he knew that Anne would have no comfort, whatever care he took of her if left to their tender mercies; so that he at once removed her, and placed her under the care of a decent woman in the neighbourhood, who taught a few children their A, B, C. Here she thrrove apace, as she was permitted to run at liberty. Her affections and sensibilities soon developed themselves, and were centered on her benefactor; and as she bounded along the footpath to meet and welcome him, with her sunny smile and laughing voice, morning, noon and night he blessed the hour when he had snatched her from the mill.

Seven years had passed since he had adopted his protégée, when she was seen for a moment by the Countess of Haggerton. From a beautiful child she had grown up into a lovely woman, with large and soft eyes, of deep blue, and full of meaning as if they penetrated into the recesses of her heart. Her nose, that important feature in woman's face, was small but beautifully formed, and her lips and teeth reminded one of "pearls beneath roses." Her bust, just "budding into womanhood,"

was a model of exquisite symmetry, and her arms and hands were small, round and tapering, with feet of equal proportion. These separate charms were set off by a light, graceful and middle-sized figure, and a clear and fair complexion.

Nor was the "divinity within" so fair a form unworthy its shrine, for Anne was gentle-minded, full of tenderness, and good tempered. What little education had been bestowed upon her had not been thrown away, and she had acquired a number of minor accomplishments by her own unassisted natural grace. Manford supplied her abundantly with means, and a cottage, which he had built purposely for her, was a little rustic palace.

It was here that Manford spent most of his leisure time, leaving his own magnificent house to his mother and sisters. Anne sung for him, or amused him by reading; and on his part he treated her uniformly as a kind and indulgent parent. Their intercourse was, it is true, misrepresented, by those who sinned under similar circumstances, but that signified nothing.

Such was Anne Talbot, the foundling, and thus her fate became mixed up with the Manfords'. Unknown as she was, any rank might have been proud to have owned her. She had, of course, heard of the visit of the noble party, and stirred, perhaps, by some innate associations, her curiosity was highly excited, and she had, in observing them, been seen, for a moment, by the countess.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO VALE HALL—PLEBEIAN PECULIARITIES.

“Truc it is, and I hope I shall not offend their vulgarities.”
Brown.

A few days after the visit of inspection to Mansford's mill, the family received an invitation, to dine at Vale Hall, from Sir John Scarsbrook. This was a joyful announcement, and put to flight the anger which had been excited by what was conceived to be the contemptuous behaviour of the noble party, with which the reader has already been made acquainted.

Note of preparation was at once given, as the day fixed was the following Thursday. It was as a matter of course that the ladies should be properly equipt, for meeting people, as they called them, of such tip-top fashion. Accordingly, Manchester being their fashionable town, it was needful to pay a visit there, in order to procure suitable dresses.

As yet, Mansford had stood out against keeping a carriage; a blue painted caravan, used for carrying fine goods, was, therefore, the only conveyance they could command, and this was put into requisition forthwith. The indispensable Jem was the driver of this respectable vehicle, clad in a rusty black coat, a hat somewhat the worse for wear, thick corduroy breeches, and a pair of huge start-ups on his feet.

In this elegant "chaise longue," the female Manfords made their first trip to Manchester, in order to concert measures with Mrs. Brown, the most noted milliner in the town. On descending from their carriage, by the help of a chair and Jem's shoulder, as there were no steps fixed to it, they were received with distinguished attention by Mrs. Brown herself, because they were extravagant customers and good payers. This lady, who, in her half-yearly fashion cards, intimated that she had her articles direct from the establishment of the most celebrated "modiste" of Paris, listened to Mrs. Manford's account of their grand invitation, with an air of astonishment, and straightway placed before them some of her most costly articles, all direct from London or Paris; protesting, upon her honour, that nobody as yet had even seen them.

A vast deal, as is usual on such occasions, was said; and Mrs. Brown handed them to their carriage, with the satisfactory assurance, that they might put their minds at ease, as they should be dressed fit for a royal drawing-room. This was cheering news, and so they drove back again, Jem alternately singing and whistling, as he perched in front, in order to amuse himself.

The day following again saw them at Mrs. Brown's door for the purpose of trying on.

"Well, Mrs. Brown," said Mrs. Manford, "we shall leave all to you—and you knows as how we don't mind expense—only be particular about our head-gear—as we all likes bows and feathers."

Thursday came in due course, and a busy day it was at Factory Hall. The dresses had arrived by express, and at ten o'clock operations commenced, which lasted till four.

A very unlucky "contretems," however, occurred to spoil Mrs. Manford's temper—whether or not Mrs. Brown had lost her measure, certain it is that

when Miss Phœbe had slipped on her richly-brocaded new gown, it was found to be nearly a quarter of a yard too scanty in the waist; this was a terrible blow, and had, it seems, arisen from Mrs. Brown refusing to measure the "dear lady," as she called her, because she knew her size to a hair, having very carefully measured her some six months before.

This was a great oversight on Mrs. Brown's part, inasmuch as her measure remained just of its original length—not so Mrs. Manford's waist, good eating and good drinking, as she declared, will tell a tale, and this tale had been told in the present case, by an increase of several inches in circumference. It was in vain they tugged and pulled the unlucky dress—it was in vain they kneaded Mrs. Manford's rotundity. All would not do, the dress was too unyielding, and her person too yielding, for whatever bulk they managed to get rid of at one point, they were sure to find pushing out at another. It was in vain that the fat lady herself humoured their efforts, and placed her dumpy hands on her sides, and emptied her chest, till she became black in the face, and had scarcely a grain of air left in her lungs; it would not do, and though once or twice they did succeed in bringing the opposite seams into contact, no sooner did she begin to breathe freely, than the parts flew wide asunder; this was enough to put a saint's temper to the proof, much more that of a woman, and that woman Mrs. Manford, and she wished Mrs. Brown at Jericho, the Red Sea, the devil, and other customary wishing places a hundred times. After her fretting, fuming and straining, there remained no help, but dressing in another gown of somewhat plainer material, very much to the lady's dissatisfaction.

Luckily for Mrs. Brown's credit and custom, the young ladies' dresses fitted, as Phœbe said, to

a T, and after their hair had undergone a world of brushing, and had had an ounce or two of the Macassar of the day expended upon it, the "nodding plumes" were duly affixed, and their assistant maid declared—"They were as fine as show folk," —a most gratifying compliment.

This important part of the preparations being complete, they next proceeded to prepare themselves against any defect in the victualling department of Vale Hall, by making a good and substantial dinner. Phoebe said—"As how, she supposed, such grand people dined on nothing but soups and kickshaws, and those would'n't do for her," and to this sentiment the rest acceded.

There was another point too, on which Mrs. Manford was especially careful, and that was to fill a small willow-twisted flask with right cogniac, in order to supply herself and daughters with a dram, just before arriving at the Hall. This precaution she took, because, as she sagely remarked, "They might find things different there to what they were used to, and she could'n't, for shame, ask the countess for a drink as she did her neighbours."

Manford now joined them, plainly dressed; and presently the blue caravan drove up, with Jem in all his glory—it came to the side-door, the front entrance and the nicely gravelled walks being kept for show not for use.

Ready, was the word, and the ladies "stooping their lofty crests," disappeared, one by one, within the carriage, Manford took his seat beside them, and as the feathers nodded, and the ladies ducked, to avoid coming into ruinous collision with the low roof, he internally wished they might be demolished by some unlucky jolt.

After they had proceeded several miles in safety, though not without some narrow escapes of seri-

ous damage, Mandford's evil wish seemed on the point of being fulfilled, the horse plunged and stumbled, and the ladies shouted in chorus to Jem, "To mind what he was doing!"

"Why, Missis," said the fellow, through an opening in front, "it's no fault o'mine—that d—d blacksmith, must ha' pricked Jack's forefoot, for he halts terribly, and——"

Here this harrangue was put a stop to by the said Jack going down on his knees, and tilting Jem, head foremost from his seat. The catastrophe inside was shocking,—the jolt entirely destroyed the needful posture of the ladies, and bows and feathers were sadly robbed of their fair proportions.

The clamour was dreadful, and Manford descended to see what was the matter; the horse had picked up a pebble, which Jem had neglected to notice, till it had got forced between the shoe and the quarter; after having removed this, and bestowed several smart cuffs upon Jem's idle person, he remounted, and after a world of abuse and perking out of feathers, they came in sight of the Hall. Here the dram was duly administered, each fair lady putting her lips to the flask, and drinking ad libitum.

The party on their arrival, were shown into the library, and joined in a few minutes by Sir John, Lady Lucy and his lordship. After being severally introduced, and a few common-place remarks made, dinner was announced, and her ladyship taking Manford's arm, left the ladies to be brought up by the gentlemen.

A good and well-cooked dinner passed off pretty well; conversation was kept alive by Lady Lucy's vivacity, aided by her lord and her brother, in which Manford took his share. Mrs. Manford and her daughters were, however, too ill at ease to answer except monosyllabically; they could not join,

and indeed, hardly understood the elegant badinage, which fell upon their ears as something strange and foreign, and Mrs. Mánford durst not recruit her flagging and over-awed spirits, by drinking as she would have done at her own table. The volubility with which she entertained Sir John, when at Factory Hall, was now dead within her and she hardly ventured to speak above her breath.

The indifference of Lady Lucy to the motions of her servants, and the ease and quietude with which every thing was conducted, utterly amazed her also, as she was accustomed to keep a sharp eye upon them, and to direct in no very "holiday terms," their out-goings, and in-comings. Then the tranquillity reigning through the house, the size and noble appearance of the rooms, the massiveness of the carved panel-work, blackened by time, gave altogether an air of grandeur to the place, widely differing from the aspect of her own modern and more showy residence.

Dinner—dessert—and a glass of wine—and her ladyship led the way into a noble with-drawing-room. Here she did every thing in her power to amuse her visitors and to lead them to amuse themselves. The most beautiful articles of bijoutèrie, splendid specimens from burines of the most famous artists, books of drawings and of illustrated costumes, portfolios of scraps, sketches and caricatures were laid before them, and all failed in exciting their pleased attention,—they looked first at the rare collection and then at each other, and were vastly uncomfortable; the gems, pictures and books, were gems, pictures and books, and nothing more, and they knew as much about them as a Hottentot.

Every thing she did being vain, the good-natured countess began to feel an uneasy restraint; there was, she saw, no topic in common between them, no community of feeling, no point of similarity or

taste, no open ground in fact on which both could speak.—As a last resource she said—

“In returning the other day from Mr. Manford’s mill, I caught a glimpse of an exceedingly sweet looking girl, not very far from it—can you tell me, Mrs. Manford, who she may be?—She was delicate looking and very pretty.”

“No, my lady, unless it’s Anne, our John’s pet, and it was most likely her, nobody else that I know would be skulking about idle all day.”

“Whoever she may be, I was much pleased with the glance I had of her.—Is she a daughter of Mr. Manford’s?”

“A daughter, my lady!—No she’s a poor little foundling, down from London, sent with a lot more; and our John took a fancy to her, I’m sure I don’t know for what.”

“Indeed—then do you receive such hapless creatures—for what purpose can they be sent to Mr. Manford?”

“Oh, my lady, they are sent to work i’ th’ mill. We’ve had many and many a score of ‘em.”

“Poor creatures!—but it is, perhaps, fortunate they are sent to a humane man, like Mr. Manford, who I am sure will treat them kindly.”

“Why yes, my lady, our John’s pretty well with them, now. At first he used to play the dickens with them.”

“Then I presume, the fair girl whom I saw resides with you; I wish you had brought her, as I should have been very glad to have seen her more closely.”

“No, no, my lady; I assure your ladyship we shouldn’t think of colloquing with her.—Why, will you believe it, my lady, she doesn’t know who was her father!”

“Mr. Manford, then, is kind to the poor forlorn

creature," said Lady Lucy, somewhat hurt at Mrs. Manford's tone of speaking.

"That he is, my lady; she lives to do nothing but to read and sew and sing, just for all the world as if she was a born lady. But we never speaks to her."

At this moment they were joined by the gentlemen, and her ladyship drew Manford apart, leaving his mother and sisters to be amused by her husband and brother.

"You have been kind to a poor foundling child, I understand, Mr. Manford. I believe I have seen her already, and she seemed very pretty and engaging. Is she an amiable girl?"

"That she is, I'll warrant her," he replied, "a prettier or a better lass there is not in England. I suppose our women have been be-calling her. Don't mind a word they say; I love her as if she were my own child, and she deserves it."

Her ladyship was no less pleased than amused by his earnestness; and led him on till he had described her, and bepraised her to his heart's content. He was proud of her, and proud to find, that a person of Lady Haggerton's rank took an interest in her story; and he spoke with feeling respecting her past and future prospects.

Shortly afterwards coffee was brought in, and the party broke up; and about eleven o'clock the Manfords reached home, with mingled feelings of gratified vanity and disappointment.

CHAPTER IX.

EFFECTS OF THE VISIT TO VALE HALL.

"A stormy encounter,
About I know not what! nothing indeed but
Competitions—degrees—and comparatives
Of nonsense."

Fair Quarrel.

On the following morning, Sir John Scarsbrook was seated with his noble guests, in the Gothic library, at Vale Hall. The sun shone through two richly painted windows, filling the room with soft light, and a splendour

"Streaming from off the sun-like Seraph's wing."

They were in conversation, seated round a table, on which were books and drawings.

"I cannot," said her ladyship, "free my mind from the impression left upon it by our visitors of yesterday. Like an unpleasant dream, which clings to one's memory even during sun-shine, they are perpetually haunting me; but chiefly the story of the foundling. I honour Manford for his compassion, and his attachment to the forlorn child."

"You are right, Lucy," said her brother, "Manford, under a rugged and uncouth exterior, has some points of sterling feeling. He offers, indeed, a pretty strong contrast to his mother and sisters in this respect—as we were shocked at the tone of scorn and hatred with which they spoke of the poor creature."

" You cannot imagine the relief I experienced, when you joined us. Good nature I look upon as essential in woman's character—and tenderness and love of children as parts of her very nature. When a woman, too, has been a mother, and has experienced that strange happiness, which must surely fill a mother's heart when gazing upon her child—I cannot understand how she can divest herself of such feelings; and I own that a dislike has sprung up in my mind towards the female members of Mr. Manford's family."

" That is unusual, Lucy, with you, though it does not surprise me. Mere coarseness of manner, and provincialism of dialect, which are accidental circumstances, have not, I am sure, produced your dislike. Though sufficiently offensive, it would be harsh to blame, and unjust to avoid individuals on account of them."

" No, Charles, no; these things, though unpleasant as jarring upon our customary and familiar habits, I could bear with well enough. But what says our wise brother—are coarse manners and rude speeches indicative of minds equally coarse and rude—or are they merely rust, obscuring, without injuring deeply the more precious metal?"

Whilst this conversation was proceeding, the objects of it were as busy as people well could be. Jem and the blue caravan were again in requisition; and there was not a single acquaintance they did not call upon.

Great was the wonder excited by the flaming account they gave of their visit—and numberless were the inquiries made as to what they saw and heard.

At one house they came into contact with the Nortons—with whom they were running a race of gentility. No sooner, however, did these hear, that they had dined with a lord and a lady, let

alone a baronet, than they "vailed their diminished heads," and departed the field. Old Mrs. Manford strutted and chuckled like an enamoured turkey; and was never tired of repeating, nor her auditors of listening to, "my lord said this, and my lady did that, and Sir John handed me to the table, just as if I had been a duke's wife."

"But would you believe it, her ladyship wanted me to have brought Anne with me, the hussy. Marry come up! a pretty tale.—I felt downright insulted, that I did."

"Well," said Miss Trickle, "I never heard of such a thing. Only to think of a born lady wanting to see a chance child! what could put it into her head I wonder.—But what sort of a woman is her ladyship?"

"Oh, a real lady I assure you. She showed us books and pictures and trinkums—and talked of staturs and buildings and all sorts of foreign things."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Miss Trickle, junior, "what did you say? I'm sure I should have been quite non-plus'd."

"Oh, you see, I just said nothing; and so I dare say she thought we were mighty clever.—Howsomever I intends asking them to dine at Factory Hall—and then we'll show 'em what we knows in these parts."

Every ear was now pricked up, and abundance of civilities heaped upon the Manfords. The choicest wine, and the nicest cake, almost certain ways to the old lady's heart, were obsequiously offered, in hopes of being invited.—But she remained obdurate—and her rotund person waddled out, and the caravan was again in motion without giving the slightest hope of any such favour.

Away went the exulting Manfords to the sound of Jem's "Gee up," and wherever they went, never

failing to go through the same round of queries and answers, and ending with the announcement, that they intended having a grand dinner-party—well knowing that the parties who heard her would expect to be asked.

"But no," said Mrs. Manford, "we'll just show 'em who are their betters. Only to think of the Trickles—Ashes—Carrs and Marshes, that was working i' th' mill not many years since, wanting to dine with the nobility.—Good lorjus—I never heard of such impudence."

An entire morning was devoted to this charitable work, and they left behind them a train of vexation and spite, of which they soon reaped the harvest.

Meanwhile Manford was sitting and chatting to his protégée Anne, and telling her all that the countess had said. Now the praise which had fallen from her ladyship was particularly grateful to him, as it was probably the first time that he had been eulogized, and his motives properly understood with regard to her; he ended his long account by saying—

"I'll tell thee what, Anne, she's almost as pretty, and I believe, almost as good as thee," and in making this comparison, he gave her the highest commendation he could bestow.

"No very great compliment to her ladyship, I should think," replied Anne laughingly.

"Aye but it is though, for she's the only woman I ever saw, that I could say so much for."

"It's very odd," said Anne, "what a wish I have to see these noble persons;—since I knew they were in the neighbourhood, I have never ceased thinking about them.—It's very silly is it not?"

"Well, Anne, I'm going over to-morrow on some

business with Sir John, and thou shall ride wi' me.—I'm sure her ladyship will be glad to see thee."

"Not for the world—it would be the very height of rudeness."

"Well, that beats me," said Manford, "here just now, nothing would be so liked.—Adad Anne thou art a true woman."

"Ah! well—I do own, I am dying with curiosity, to speak to her, but it will never do to go that way."

"What is the way then? for see her, I'm determined thee shall. Come now, there's a lassie—do go wi' me, and luck will perhaps stand our friend."

Anne's curiosity at length gained the mastery, and, after stipulating that she was to have just her own way, she agreed to ride with him to Vale Hall on the morrow.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOUNDLING'S VISIT TO THE HALL.

"As the sun breaks through the darkest cloud,
So honour peereth through the meanest habit."
Shakespeare.

On the following morning, Manford and Anne were on their way to Vale Hall at an early hour. Spite of his entreaties she remained at the lodge, whilst he proceeded to transact his business with Sir John, which, when completed, as he was returning through the park, he met the countess, who had been taking her morning ramble.

"Good morning, Mr. Manford, I am glad to see you, and must prevail upon you to dine with us, as I am very anxious to have some farther account of your protégée."

"Why, my lady, there's the difficulty, for to speak truth, Anne rode with me, but she winna on no account come to the Hall; I did promise not to say a word about it, but what can I do?"

"I am glad you have mentioned it. Wait for me a moment, and I will accompany you to the lodge."

In a few minutes she returned with her brother, and they walked forward with Manford. Anne's confusion was extreme, when she saw her wishes thus unexpectedly fulfilled; and on being introduced by her protector, she blushed and hesitated, partly with shame, and partly with pleasure.

Both the countess and Sir John were much

pleased with Anne's appearance; the baronet thought in his heart that he had never seen a more lovely creature, and could only wonder how so delicate and beautiful a girl, could have sprung up amidst the coarse forms and rude tutelage which had surrounded her. His sister was equally delighted with her natural though rustic grace, and her refined though simple ideas. Manford rubbed his hands together, but said nothing; and the party returned to the hall in high spirits.

Here her ladyship introduced Anne to the earl, and then took her under her especial protection, into her own room to dress for dinner. Her kind and feminine manners, at once placed Anne at ease, and she charmed her ladyship by her naïveté and simplicity. Every thing she said or did, bespoke purity and singleness of heart, and differed widely from the conventional tone of society, to which Lady Haggerton had always been accustomed. Her own character, plain, open and sincere, made her enter with great zest, into the spirit of Anne's feelings and expressions.

On her side, the foundling, grateful for the attention shown to her, and quickly discovering Lady Lucy's sympathy of thinking and feeling, revealed all the hidden stores of her character, and these two lovely beings, so different in their histories and in their fates, had not been together more than an hour, when Anne felt as if she might have known her from childhood. Her delight was unbounded, hitherto she had never associated with individuals of her own sex, with whom she could enter freely and unreservedly into confidence, none to whom she could speak, in any way her own feelings directed. Removed when a child from her companions in misfortune, buffeted and repulsed by those who should have cherished and protected her, and never having known or dreamed

of a mother's love, or a mother's sympathy, she had been driven as it were within herself; her mind was thus a storehouse of natural beauties, which waited but the touch of some congenial spirit to unlock its treasures, and bring them into full daylight; this was at length found, and though the difference of rank might seem to have placed an insuperable barrier between her and the countess, the enthusiasm and generosity of the latter at once removed it.

The interest which Lady Lucy felt for the foundling, was no doubt heightened by her singular and melancholy history; under any circumstances, this would have roused and brought into play her womanly sensibilities. Her more than orphan condition, her utter isolation in the world, without one single being with whom she could claim kindred or look for support, strongly excited her imagination, and though she delicately forbore allusion to this, the groundwork of her kindness rested upon it.

After dinner, her ladyship again withdrew Anne, and found her first favourable impressions heightened, so that when Manford sent to say that the horses were waiting the regrets at parting were mutually expressed—tears indeed sprung into Anne's eyes, as she pressed Lady Lucy's proffered hand to her lips, and a warm and cordial invitation was given that she would renew her visit to the hall at the earliest opportunity.

"Well, Lucy," said Sir John, "of all the girls I have ever seen, yonder creature is by far the most fascinating. By Jove! it almost seems a shame, that so fair a being should drag on her existence in a sphere so utterly at variance with her loveliness. Who can tell from whence she has derived her origin, for there is nobility stamped legibly on her brow."

"I have been much, very much pleased with her," answered her ladyship. "The entire absence of all artificial restraint, the freshness of her observations, the obvious delicacy and purity of her own feelings, would make her a *charming* companion. If birth may be judged of from innate grace and refinement of sentiment—then is Anne noble:—and if the accident of birth has not made her so, nature has made ample amends. Would that the mystery which does, and which probably ever will, cloud her descent could be removed."

"It would, perhaps, be unwise," said his lordship, "to make such remarks in her hearing. Placed as she is, and treated by Manford with paternal fondness, why disturb the placid, though ignoble current which is destined to carry her through life? Nay, it is questionable Lucy, if her happiness will be improved by your association. That she is a delightful and really fascinating girl I readily allow. No man can look into her deep blue eyes, or on her polished and expressive features, without acknowledging, that she is lovely. But I should fear it is the loveliness of the spring violet, which sheds its perfume upon the first warm gales of April, and withers and dies before the influence of advancing summer."

"Oh fie, Charles!—you, with your really excellent knowledge of the sex, to suppose, that the heart and the head of a creature like Anne, with all their yet untried passions and feelings, would prove but the delight of a passing hour! Believe me, there is a deep fount of womanly tenderness locked up within yonder beautiful casket. But alas! her sensibilities will never be called into play in their nobler characteristics;—and if she should fix her affections where they are not duly and fully cherished, she will sink broken hearted into

the grave. Her fate and her character interest me greatly."

"Well," my dear, my opinion yields before your feminine sagacity. It would be a happy thing, could you imbue some of us self-styled "lords of the creation" with a portion of that knowledge, or instinct, which enables you to trace the character of each other. It would save a world of troubles."

"Well, well, Charles—laugh as you please; but depend upon it, that my woman's wit is a surer guide, in these respects, than your boasted male sagacity."

Meanwhile Manford and his charge were travelling rapidly homeward, much delighted with their visit. When he reached Factory Hall, he was eagerly questioned by his mother and sisters, as to where he had been with Anne; and their rage and vexation made them

"Ultra feminam feroceſ,"

when he gave them a brief, but by no means an undercoloured history of their reception by the nobility. He had, however, too much regard for his sense of hearing to remain to listen to the objurgations, which were lavishly thundered against the innocent and unoffending foundling. Their spite and anger against her were well known; and he believed himself to be incapable of being influenced by them, to withdraw or lessen his regard for her.

In their wisdom, the female Manfords forwarded their proposed invitation to the Baronet and Lord and Lady Haggerton. This was very politely declined, and their rage and mortification were unbounded. The whole of this mischance was attributed to poor Anne, and it required all Man-

ford's authority to prevent their paying her a visit en masse, for the amiable purpose of upbraiding her with her baseness, as they termed it, for having told stories of them; this being, according to their mode of explaining it, the sole cause of their notable failures for monopolizing the company of the nobility.

On this account, they were, indeed, subjected to a host of petty but vexatious annoyances from their incensed neighbours: all of whom opened a battery of sarcasm and of cutting inquiries, which wounded the vanity of the Manfords to the quick. The Misses Trickle, in place of halting, and holding out the right hand of neighbourly friendliness, passed on with a distant and ceremonious salutation; and old Mrs. Carr, the mother of a quondam inamorato of Phœbe's, who had a convenient dullness of understanding, would stop them, in the very church porch, and ask in a loud voice, "how were the nobility, when they last saw them?" This was a galling question, and one she never failed to put. It was in vain Mrs. Manford assured her, they cared nothing about the nobility.

"Why, good Lorjus—didn't Phœbe tell our William, as how she should marry a lord," and the tormenting old woman hobbled away, with a stare of innocent astonishment that was quite provoking.

CHAPTER XI.

PLEBEIAN MARRIAGE MAKING

“What is it woman cannot do?”
Otway.

“What's man's boasted sovereignty—
Or boasted power, when they oppose their arts.”
Fair Penitent.

Early in September, Lord and Lady Haggerton prepared to leave Vale Hall, intending to pass some weeks in the South of France, now open to them, in consequence of the short peace of Amiens.

They had earnestly desired that Sir John Scarsbrook should accompany them, but their persuasions to this effect had failed; and they regretted it exceedingly, as it was clear to them, that he was suffering his fine understanding to be clouded by occasional melancholy, induced, they believed, by the solitary and musing life which he led. He, however, urged some pretext of business—the real cause being that he was unwilling to plunge again into the vortex of society, from which he had made himself a voluntary exile. He was aware that his relatives intended to pass through London, without making any stay; but he also knew, that they purposed to remain some time at Paris,—then crowded with English,—as his lordship was a particular friend of the British ambassador, to whom Sir John was also well known. He promised, however, to join them at Avignon or Nice, and to spend the winter with them in Italy. With

this promise they departed—and he was left to his solitary musings.

After the foundling's first visit to her noble friends, more than three or four days seldom passed without her being at the Hall—sometimes brought by Manford—sometimes coming alone—and at other times Lady Lucy had driven to the cottage, for the purpose of bringing her back with her. The familiarity which followed from this constant intercourse had only tended to increase the liking which all felt for her, as even his lordship's doubts had given way before the modest and unassuming yet dignified and beautiful girl.

Her ladyship's regard would have tempted her to have proposed taking Anne with her, on their tour, but here his lordship kindly and judiciously interfered; and he pointed out that the interest of Anne might be injured by her removal. Besides the fact, that Manford had repeatedly declared, that nothing should ever induce him to part with her, unless her own expressed wish;—and, on her part, such an expression would have been the height of cruelty towards her protector.

These considerations so far influenced her ladyship, that she forbore to express her wishes to Anne, who saw her depart with tearful eyes, and listened eagerly to the promise, that her benefactress and friend would return early in spring.

The hatred of Mrs. Manford and her daughters had been much exasperated, by the continued kindness which Anne experienced from her noble admirers. All their own advances had been civilly but decidedly repulsed; and they underwent the mortification always felt by little minds, on being pushed back upon their own rank; and in which, as we have seen, they were compelled to undergo a species of social martyrdom, and a number of coarse indignities, excited by their presumptuous

attempts to distance their compeers, in the race of advancement.

Every instance of this galled them sorely, and kept up their fury against poor Anne. Every art that female malignity and ingenuity could invent, was put in force to injure her spotless character. Manford, however, stood firm, though his position was a vexatious one. His mother was ever striving to instil the

“Venomous poison into his ear.”

Incidents were related with all the distortion and exaggeration of malice; stories were framed for the purpose of making him believe that she despised and laughed at him—a point on which he was peculiarly susceptible:—and, in short, all the wiles of an artful and enraged woman, were called into play to ruin her in his estimation.

Shakspeare said well, that

“The venom'd clamours of a *hating* woman,
Poison more deadly than a mad-dog's tooth.”

But fortunately for Anne—

“Her soul was like a star, that dwelt apart.”

and, for a time, the efforts of her enemies were counteracted by her utter unconsciousness of them, and by her continuing to treat Manford with the same unaffected tenderness, which had ever marked her conduct towards him. She showed her unabated attachment, indeed, in a thousand innocent ways, that it was impossible to overlook or misconstrue. Still her situation was a critical one, as very strenuous endeavours were making to bring on a union betwixt John Manford and one of the Miss Nortons—the beligerent parties having

come to a truce, and agreed to unite their forces, for the laudable purpose of ruining the foundling. Traps were laid for him—he was preached to by his mother—smiled at and petted by his sisters—and baited in no very delicate manner by the lady herself—till, at length, he found himself in such a quandary, to use his own language, that he resolved to speak to Anne on the subject, for he had more faith in her good sense and judgment, than in those of his mother or his own.

"Well, Anne, our folk are for having me married, willy nilly, and bother me off my life about it."

"Ah! my dear sir,—if you think you should be happier married,—marry by all means, how glad I shall be to love your wife as a mother!"

"Why, I don't know—I am afraid Nancy Norton would be as bad as the rest of 'em. And then, I suppose, if I were married she would be for keeping me tied to her apron-string—and that wouldn't suit me."

"Dear me!—sure they don't press Miss Norton upon you? Why, I have always heard you say, that they were a family you particularly disliked."

"Why, aye, but some how or other, the women have foregathered again; and though I don't care a brass button about her, I wish I was well quit of her."

"Surely, sir, you would not marry a woman for whom you did not feel some affection. Bless me! I cannot imagine any thing more shocking, than to live with a person whom one does not love."

"Oh, aye, Anne, it's very well for you youngsters to talk of love, and such like, but we older folks think very little about such stuff—which is, likely enough, very well in its way. But thee sees, Anne, our women lead me such a life, up yonder, about thee,

that I don't know but I should be better, if I had only one to manage."

"Dear sir," said Anne, her eyes filling with tears, "whatever it can be, that they quarrel with you about me for; I am sure I have done all in my power to reconcile them, and am very, very sorry, they make you uncomfortable about me; but do not, I beseech you, let any consideration for me, for one moment influence you in the matter, though it would break my heart to send me away."

"No, no, Nanny," answered Manford, kissing her tearful cheek, "never heed 'em, they're full of spite about your visiting the grandees, and they tell all sorts of nonsense, as to what they pretend you did and said, while with them."

"Ah, sir, you may depend that I never said or did, one thing but what I would say and do to you; Lady Lucy's noble and generous nature, is the best guarantee for that; sure I am that I owe an eternal debt of love and gratitude to her."

"That thee does, my dear—but our women don't understand such folks as her ladyship and thee. You talk no scandal, don't backbite and belie people behind their backs, and sugar 'em up before their faces; and because you don't do these things, they think you do worse—if worse could be—and so becall and belie you—and make you as bad as themselves."

And so saying, Manford stalked away, fully determined not to marry to please other people, either Nancy Norton or any body else. In this valorous resolution he proceeded to his own house—but it is one thing to make a resolution and another to keep it.

On reaching home he found Nancy herself in solemn conclave with his mother and sisters;—they at once commenced active operations upon him, which speedily silenced his half muttered re-

monstrances—no reserve was shown upon this occasion—no sentiment was broached—no whining affectation of long-cherished hopes—no tender sighs—no down-cast looks—no invocations to Cupid, Venus, or the

“bright star of love.”

These usual preliminaries were dispensed with, match-making and not love-making being the order of the day; and as Mrs. Manford sagely remarked, “Neither of them were chickens, to stand pecking at the barn door, when they might fly in by the loft.”

Under a battery of four female tongues, all within point-blank range, Manford’s situation was any thing but agreeable, and it soon became too hot even for his passive temperament. Once or twice he endeavoured to effect an escapade, but was foiled by the superior tactics of his opponents, as they had made a dead set at him, and were determined to carry their point “*vi et armis.*” Manford, backed, wheeled, faced right and left, but a foe met him in every quarter—in front sat his mother, his flanks were occupied by two of his sisters, while his rear was held in check by another, aided by Nancy Norton in propria persona.

Still like a stag at bay he held out, and gave no symptoms of yielding, when his mother, who acted as generalissimo, on this portentous occasion, changed her strategy, and suddenly falling back, applied a handkerchief to her face, as if in the extremity of distress, and uttering a dolorous ejaculation of “Oh, John!” between a whine and a howl, was chorussed by the whole of the bevy, who took their cue from their leader, and “Oh, John!” was whined around him, as if they had

been celebrating his wake, instead of endeavouring to lead him to marry.

Mrs. Manford knew her ground, and Manford, to use his own expression, was completely "dumb-founded." In this dilemma he exclaimed—

"What the devil do you women want?"

The note was again given, and he was greeted with the cry of "Oh, John, how can you be so cruel!" and a tempest of sobs assailed him, enough, as he declared, "To break the heart of a mill-stone." Till spying his opportunity, whilst their faces were hidden in their handkerchiefs, he unceremoniously and ungallantly, made a somewhat ignoble exit.

The ladies, when thus left in possession of the field, looked at each other for a moment in mute surprise, and then burst into a fit of—

"zealous laughter."

"Well," said Phœbe, "it's capital fun—I'm ready to split—what a figure he did cut to be sure. But I don't think he'll ha' thee Nancy."

"Aye, but he must have her," answered the mother, "we must bring him to it—look how lusty he's grown lately—and Doctor Chalkface who came here yesterday, to cure me of my 'spespy,' told me he may tumble down any day in a fit of 'poplexy,' and if he does he'll leave all he has to that vixen Anne, I'm sure, and then she'll jeer and laugh at us to a pretty tune, I'm thinking."

"Well," said Miss Norton, "we've broken the ice any way, and its mighty hard, if we cannot cajole him amongst us—I do believe," continued she laughing, "we've frightened him fairly, and that's something."

"Hah! ha! ha!" answered another of the vestals,—"It was lucky he run away, for I'm sure I

should ha' burst out soon. I never," said she, the tears running down her cheeks, "I never laughed so heartily in all my born days."

The party then gathered together in order to suggest and lay down further plans, for their future attacks, which proved so successful, that in a very short time, Manford struck his colours, and fairly clamoured out of his own sense of right and wrong, gave a somewhat ungracious consent to consider Miss Norton as his future *sposa*.

It would have been indeed a difficult thing for any man, to have resisted such a continued series—

"of feminine assaults—tongue batteries."

as Manford was exposed to—morning, noon and night, Nancy Norton was the burthen of mother's and sisters' remarks, and when abroad he had as little respite. His neighbours viewed it as a settled thing, and always showed their civility by wishing him joy on his approaching marriage—for the females had taken good care to secure these important out-works, of a kind of marriage seige, which has overcome wiser men than Manford. In point of fact, there was nothing particularly objectionable in the match—the parties were of a similar age, of the same status in society, and taken altogether it was a subject of gratulation to their coarse and wealthy neighbours, to see the accumulated property of one of themselves fixed where it was.

In a week or two, therefore, he succumbed quietly, and the marriage of John Manford and Nancy Norton were duly solemnized.

CHAPTER XII.

TRIALS.

"Wives———pictures out of doors,
Bells in their parlours—wild cats in their kitchens—
Saints in their injuries—devils being offended."

Othello.

"Et mentem Venus ipsa dedit."
Virgil.

For several weeks after the departure of the Earl and Countess of Haggerton, Sir John led a solitary and by no means a very happy life. He felt alone—he wanted his sister's smile, and her animated conversation; and he wandered uneasily from one part of his demesne to another, till he had summoned up resolution to bid the Hall farewell.

Before doing so, he determined on calling to see Anne. Her grace and beauty had made a stronger impression upon his mind than he was willing to believe; and her image not unfrequently flitted before him, as he sat in his noble library, which had been the scene of their frequent interviews. There was no small share of romance in Sir John's disposition, and though his intercourse with the great world had rubbed away some of the more imaginative points of his character, his late seclusion had again called into being a portion of the wayward, but delightful fancies, which crowd the heart of the enthusiast.

On knocking at the cottage door, it was opened by the foundling, whose pleased and surprised air,

could not hide from him, the change which a few weeks had produced upon the beautiful girl. She was pale, thin, and had an obvious expression of suffering and dejection about her. She inquired, with the most anxious fondness, after her ladyship; whilst the tears trembled in her eyes, as he answered her queries.

Sir John Scarsbrook was not a man to see, unmoved, the distress of the creature before him. He was not one of those intellectual beings, who transform themselves, by a selfish philosophy, into the “teres atque rotundus!” of the poet, but was himself a feeling and impassioned man; and he was now doomed to know the power of witchcraft, which dwells—

“In the particular orb of one small tear.”

Anne's exquisite beauty was perhaps heightened by her late sufferings. Since Manford's marriage, a complete revolution had been worked in her little world: she had received the announcement with as much cheerfulness as she could assume;—but she was deeply grieved, as she was sufficiently acute to perceive, that her friend and protector must be sooner or later sundered from her. She however resolved to show to him all the tenderness which he so well deserved from her. Her task, in this respect, soon became one of great difficulty: the new Mrs. Manford joined heart and hand in the crusade against her, and affected to view her husband's visits to her as being of an improper character; and as she was, moreover, a woman of strong passions, she exercised her conjugal authority with a high hand.

Manford, though a man of sufficient doggedness and firmness of purpose, and though he knew the maliciousness of the conduct of his wife, and of his

own family, could not for ever stand out against them. His visits to the cottage were very rare, and before long his habits changed, and Anne, who had hitherto been the idol of the better and purer part of his moral nature, and whose influence had preserved him from sinking into coarser indulgences, was neglected, and now and then spoken of harshly.

This fell heavily upon poor Anne,—he was the only being on whom her affections had hitherto hung ; and as she felt that she was now thrown off, she experienced all that desolation of heart which her isolated position in the world was so well calculated to excite. All her hopes had become fixed upon the return of Lady Haggerton, to whom she now looked up as her protecting angel. She welcomed Sir John, therefore, with an *empressement* arising from his connection with the object of her daily and nightly thoughts.

He heard, with great pain, the simple narrative of her sorrows ; and his sympathising and encouraging voice came upon the fair girl's ear like "sweet music." She knew not at that moment, how indelibly a word of kindness, in season, imprints itself upon the heart—how it becomes "the writing on the wall"—the one spot on which the memory loves to dwell—and the focus of a crowd of hopes and delights, which entwine themselves with the inmost workings of the mind. And when this one word is spoken by a man like Sir John Scarsbrook, who was

"Complete in feature and in mind
With all good grace, to grace a gentleman,"

to a creature like Anne, a very thing of sympathies and sensibilities, the effect is magical ; and as her eye met his, for the first time during their ac-

quaintance, she blushed deeply, and felt agitated and embarrassed.

Their interview was a long one, Sir John leading her away from the theme of her own sorrows, to speak of his sister ; and he probably was never so struck with her charms, as when she poured out her love and her admiration before him. The "eloquent blood" mounted into her cheeks, and the fine feminine enthusiasm of her character was fully displayed. Words, such as woman can alone speak—ideas, such as dwell alone in woman's mind—looks, such as women can alone look—but words, ideas and looks which find answers in man's heart, made Sir John conscious, that the being before him was one full of enchanting grace and tenderness, and he left her, after promising to write her ladyship on the subject of her uneasiness, with a strange mingling of pain and pleasure.

To a man of Sir John's moral temperament a being like Anne would have been, at all times, and under any circumstances, a subject of interest—but now, in his solitude, when abstracted from many of the realities of life, which might have interposed between him and his imagination, and in the peculiar frame of mind generated by seclusion, she came over his spirit as a creature—

"bright,
With something of angelic light."

There was nothing near him to break the spell,—nothing to call away his attention—nothing to turn away his thoughts, and she became—

" Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky."

If he endeavoured to analyze his feelings, he imputed them to her forlorn and desolate lot, being,

as it were, deprived of the ordinary ties of humanity—a stray waif upon the world's wide common—a fragment detached from the mass of society—but the basis, the principle, was, that she was a lovely woman, and this was enough to account for his anxiety.

He wrote, however, to his sister, urging her to some steps, in order to place Anne near her person, and in the mean time, determined to constitute himself guardian and protector of her innocence.

CHAPTER XIII.

FARTHER TRIALS.

—“having waste ground enough
Shall we desire to raze sanctuary,
And pitch our evils there.”
Measure for Measure.

On the morning following Sir John's visit to Anne, he was roused from a reverie by the approach of a carriage and four with out riders. In a few minutes he was shaking his friend the Duke of Eversfield by the hand, and welcoming him to Vale Hall. The duke had been one of his town intimates, as they had many tastes in common, and were both members of a particular clique. He was a fine baronial figure, younger than Sir John by some years, and was a noted leader in the circles of fashion.

“Well, Scarsbrook, how in the name of wonder have you contrived to vegetate, in this most uncivilized neighbourhood—I have hardly seen a single habitable spot, for the last twenty miles. Your old hall looks well, and I trust your preserves are well stocked, as I am on a shooting excursion, and so have dropped in to beat up your quarters.”

“Why, pretty fair I believe, but you know I am no great follower of the ‘feræ naturæ.’”

“We will soon see,—my dogs are coming up with Tom, and we will take the field to-morrow.”

After dinner the duke and his host made their arrangement for the campaign, and for several days they committed havoc in the enclosures of

the estate. His grace was a capital shot, and one of those fine rattling characters, that make excellent field and fire-side companions; he had also a cultivated understanding, had read, travelled and seen the world in more than one of its aspects, so that the time of the baronet hung less heavily—and though not an hour passed without his thinking of Anne, above a week was suffered to elapse before he repeated his visit.

Anne had in the interim undergone a severe trial—news of Sir John's visit having been conveyed to Manford, he used it as a pretext for being angry with her, and as a cloak to cover his own injustice; hitherto he had viewed Anne as something too spotless for suspicion, but now, the venom of continued misrepresentation had done its work; he visited her in company with his wife, and reproaches and charges were rudely made against her, in language, to which happily, she had been long a stranger.

"Hussy," said Mrs. Manford, "that you are, to be sending for Sir John—a pretty thing to be sure, next I suppose he will carry you to the Hall—a nice thing, that nobody but him will serve your turn. Oh, you little hussy!—but we'll turn you out, that we will, my young missis—we'll send you tramping."

"Why, Anne, thee sees," continued Manford, "this is a touch above common—I did think thee was a better girl—hang it, if thee will be bad, why go thy ways, Sir John will, I dare say, find thee a nook somewhere—od's, me! what will her ladyship say?"

In vain Anne wept, in vain she explained, no attention was paid to her, and the Manfords left her drowned in tears, John telling her that if the baronet visited her again, he would turn her out penniless—for friendless she felt already.

The object of this interdiction being utterly unconscious of it, stopped in company with the Duke of Eversfield, at the cottage. They did not alight, as Sir John was only desirous of knowing if she were well, and to express his hopes that he should hear from Lady Lucy in the course of a week. Anne was confused, partly on his account, and partly on account of Manford's threats, which were of such a nature, and on such a subject, that she would not have dared to hint at them, even had he been alone. After they had ridden out of hearing, the duke broke out—

"I admire your taste, Scarsbrook—she is a sweet girl—and so the mystery is out—well, never fear, I am an admirer of nature myself—a moderate reader—think occasionally—and with these resources might perhaps manage to rusticate for a month or so, with tolerable grace. But you have found out a natural beauty, which might well reconcile one to a hut and a desert. She strongly reminds me of Mary Harcourt, she has the same delicacy and spiritualized expression of face."

"Why, my lord," answered Scarsbrook, "you surely cannot think that a creature so pure as she is can excite any other emotion in me, but pity for her fate—Lucy is extremely fond of her, and it is on that account only, that I call to see her." And he detailed her history to him.

"My God!" exclaimed the duke, "is it possible that a traffic so infamous exists amongst ourselves, and that this girl has been its victim—I have always hated the very name of 'foundling hospitals,' I detest institutions which hold out inducement for baseness—what a disgrace to a civilized country, to one advanced so far as our own is, in the progress of social refinement; I must see this girl again—there is a kind of romance about her, that relieves the dull tedium of the lives, actions

and characters of her sex, whom in truth I have found, so much alike, that I begin to doubt whether they have any diversity of moral structure."

"That opinion, my lord, suits well with the atmosphere of your peculiar circle; but you forget to what a limited track the female mind is there restricted, and that so imperative are the shackles which confine them, that she must be something more than woman, who would break them."

"It may be so, and if your experience be derived from this girl, I am lucky in the rencontre, and will share the benefit you have derived from her intercourse."

Scarsbrook heard the declaration with some regret, but placed as he was, he had nothing to urge against it, and he had the mortification to hear the duke speak in most eulogistic terms of Anne, a day or two afterwards, he having called during his morning's ride.

Now the Duke of Eversfield, though esteemed by the world as an "honourable man," had been famous, or rather infamous, for his unbounded license amongst the sex; possessing a captivating exterior, a tolerably cultivated mind, and abundance of modest assurance, veiled, however, under an appearance of careless indifference, and above all of high rank; he had used these as means for becoming a villain, in the most odious sense of the word—he openly avowed the opinion that—

"woman is at heart a rake,"

and had acted upon it unceasingly, in the earlier part of his fashionable career; latterly he had, however, effected to despise the sex, and the world had mistaken this imitation of Timon for virtue.

Sir John had some misgiving, and trembled for the effect his visit might produce upon the mind of

Anne—pure and unsuspecting as she was, the plausibilities of Eversfield, joined to his imposing carriage, and his status in society—he feared would prove too much for the unprotected foundling's prudence, provided Eversfield was base enough to seek to engage her affections; he ventured to hint his suspicions to him, and to point out how injurious his attentions might be to Anne's reputation; but the duke had, from nature, a somewhat hard mind, and had besides been the spoiled child of fortune, to whom self is law; he would not therefore attend to Sir John's hints, confining himself to pleading example on his part.

The Manfords heard of this new admirer of Anne's, as they termed him, with absolute awe—a duke!—they were confounded, and for a time forbore to put their scheme of ejectment into operation; Sir John waited with impatience for his sister's communication, and still more impatiently for his noble friend's departure. His stay of three or four days, had already prolonged itself to a fortnight, during which he had seen Anne four or five times, and spoke in undisguised terms of his admiration.

To his infinite relief, however, the duke declared his intention of departing, saying—

"I can make nothing of your 'cynosure,' Sir John, and have too much regard for your fair sister, to plague her by attention; and, indeed, I have no time, for I promised to meet our friend Burley, in Scotland. Will you go? He has often asked after your locale, and the castle will have only a few sportsmen to meet us."

To this proposal Sir John gave a somewhat unwilling assent, as it would remove him from being on the spot to watch over Anne; but he persuaded himself his anxiety was overcharged on her account, and being ignorant of her real position, with

regard to Manford, after giving instructions to his confidential servant, he left Vale Hall, glad to be quite sure that Eversfield was away. He proposed returning in about a fortnight, determined to proceed to join his relatives on the continent.

Eversfield said well, that he could make nothing of Anne, but he had worked her abundant misery. Surprised at his coming alone to visit her, she had, nevertheless, received him with respect, and treated him as a friend of Sir John's family. He had been polite, rather "distrait," and had embarrassed her greatly by his conversation. When he came a second time—though his rank kept her in silence —she showed plainly enough her surprise. With every insinuating art, he strove to establish himself in the confidence of the friendless girl; but her nobility of soul, her chastity of sentiment, were above his influence; and though she might feel flattered —as no woman is ever offended by respectful attention—she spoke plainly and simply; and he found, that the foundling had a character, notwithstanding Pope's libellous assertion,—and what was more, that she knew it and respected it.

CHAPTER XIV.

A REVERSE.

"This was the unkindest cut of all."

After the departure of Sir John Scarsbrook and the Duke of Eversfield, the female Manfords, who had been held in check by the imposing title of his grace, began operations against the foundling; determined to deprive her, if not of home and shelter, at least of comfort. This they were more anxious to get done, as there were moments in which Manford showed symptoms, that old habits might revive. Their minds were so essentially gross, that they could not conceive it to be possible but that Anne had intentions to lead Manford to make her his heiress; and as money was the only source of wordly distinction, or of domestic comfort known to them, they cherished it as the best, and, indeed, the only good thing on earth.

Manford himself unconsciously, or perhaps purposely added to their alarm. He led any thing but a blissful life, and was in the habit of muttering, when out of temper,—

"Aye, aye, but ye'll see—I have'na made my will yet."

There were other events, not too of so private a nature, which were pressing upon Manford's attention, and making him uneasy; so that he made little opposition to the schemes of his wife—and Anne was left to her tender mercies; the first of which was to order her into the mill as a weaver

—the second, to convert her beautiful cottage into a tenement for a protégée of her own—and the third, to insist on her being treated, in all respects, as one of the common operatives.

This was a cruel decree, rendered still more severe by her recent associations. It seemed to put an end to all her hopes, and it humiliated her so deeply in her own eyes, that she no longer dared even think of talking on equal terms with her once noble friend. Hitherto abstraction from menial drudgery, a liberal indulgence as to money, a life of independence, and pursuits, at once feminine and becoming, had taken away from her mind all feeling of inferiority, except in so far as her birth and dependent condition were concerned.

By Manford's express injunction, she had most rigidly kept herself aloof from the surrounding cottagers; and this separation had grown so much into a habit, both on her part, and on the part of the "canaille," that it seemed impossible for her to mingle with them as the companion of their labours, and to become one of them in her hours of leisure. Yet the fiat was gone forth, and on her seventeenth birthday, or rather on the same day, seventeen years after she had been received into the Foundling Hospital, she again entered Manford's mill, not having been in its interior for several years.

What her feelings were, may be well surmised. Shame, pride, fear and wonder rendered her absolutely incapable of attending to her prescribed task—of the nature of which, too, she was utterly ignorant; and the overseer warned her once and again—"That it were master's orders, that she mun work,"—and told her, that though she were a lady, piecing a few ends would do her no harm.

Anne looked around in bewilderment;—she could not fix her attention upon the loom before her. Her pure and delicate mind shrank from the

coarse language and behaviour of Jem Dobs, the overlooker, who leaned upon the side bars, and favoured her with his conversation and advice, as being a new hand, and as what he called, "one of the prettiest wenches i' th' mill."

This purgatory Anne endured from morning till noon, and then she was compelled to join the family circle of the household, in which Mrs. Manford had assigned her a residence. This was composed of vulgar and low-bred people, having the same resemblance to her as the ourang outang has to the human species. The meal was partaken of in common by several young people and their parents, at an unfurnished table, each one unscrupulously assisting himself to the dish before him.

"Come, come, young woman," said the mother of the amiable family, "don't stand whimpering that gate; may be this is na so good as you've been used to—but as yo only get thirteen shillings a week, we can afford yo no better."

Anne's tears, which she had with difficulty repressed, now broke forth, and in an agony of weeping she sat down apart from the rest. They had not much time allowed for sympathy, as their dinner had to be eaten, and as the factory bell would ring them in in twenty minutes. The coarsest and most brutalized minds could not, however, have witnessed quite unmoved the anguish of the foundling;—and one of the young women standing over her, condoled with and comforted her in her own way.

"You see Miss, it's no use to take on so; so cheer up, and who can tell but old Johnny will get fond of you again. As to Madam Manford as is, why she's no better than she should be—and so you see it's not worth while minding her. But lord-sake, get a bit of dinner, as you canna come out till four o'clock, and you'll be quite fainty."

"Betty," said her mother, interrupting her, "give her a drop of gin—I'll warrant that will comfort her."

"Aye, aye," said the husband laying aside his short pipe for a moment, with which he had been industriously engaged, "take a little drop, I always says to my wife, Nancy, says I, whether a man's hungry or dry, whether he's heart sore or foot sore, a drop of gin is a drop of comfort, so take a sup, it's done me good a hundred times."

Anne's voice was choked with tears, and she mutely rejected the proffered comfort. Amidst the well meant attentions of the family, the bell rung, to her great relief, as the scene was even more painful to her than standing before her loom, and one of a long train of dirty and squalid work-people she again entered the mill.

Manford, who had formerly been the inspector of all the operations carried on in his works, had, for some time past, been obliged to delegate to others, the superintendence of some parts of his multifarious concern, on account of his attention being claimed by other departments. This had given rise to a sort of "*imperium in imperio;*" and a set of men governed the internal economy of his mill, in every way worthy the worst portions of his own character, and a system of tyranny and brutal license had been established, fatal alike to the moral and social happiness of the operatives, especially of that of the juvenile, and of the females.

In this contaminating atmosphere, the pure and unsullied foundling was now placed. In the course of the afternoon Manford walked through the room, but he returned no answer to her piteous and tearful appeal. A sense of the injustice done to her, though it roused her indignation could suggest no means for her escape—she was solitary and friendless, for with the delicacy of a sensitive and refined

mind, she felt that the present degradation unfitted her for any further intercourse with those, whose friendship she had lately rejoiced in. The days she had passed at Vale Hall rose brightly in her memory, the smiles of Lady Lucy, the dignity of the earl, and the gracefulness of Sir John.—And her thoughts wandered from the noble library to her own sweet cottage, and dwelt at length upon the pitying look, and kind voice, which had given her comfort. She looked round, and what a contrast did her situation now present—a close and suffocating room, a crowd of dirty girls and young women, whose loud laugh, and coarse repartee, sounded but too much in unison with the place, the clack and clang of steam looms, the impudent familiarity of Jem Dobs and his brother-overlookers, and above all, a consciousness, that her young hopes were crushed, and that she was condemned to linger on her life thus degraded.

It was this which gave poignancy to her sorrow, and made her forget all but the past.

But she was placed where forgetfulness was a crime, and where mind was unknown or uncared for, and where there was no sympathy for sensibility, or day-dreaming, in proof of which, the aforesaid Jem Dobs, recalled her to realities, by a blow not very lightly administered, the “argumentum ad hominem,” the “argumentum ex baculo,” being the only logic acknowledged in the mill. Pain and terror compelled Anne’s attention—she wept indeed—

“A shower of pearls—which some call tears,’

but tears and sobs were too common to call for remark, and thus passed on the first day of her “reverse.”

CHAPTER XV.

A COMMOTION.

"Alas! truth is not found by counting noses."
Dodsley.

It was hinted in the last chapter, that there were other causes beyond domestic tribulations, which tended to withdraw Manford's immediate regards from Anne.

A vast number of operatives, who had hitherto supported themselves in comfort and delicacy, by hand-loom weaving, had been driven nearly to starvation by the application of steam and machinery to that particular branch of labour; the case was no doubt a hard one, but

—“there was no help for it,
The better disposition of the time
Would have it so;”

this truth was not perceived by the sufferers, and in the wisdom of their folly, they took the task of amending their condition into their own hands, and as ignorance was their leader, in the shape of Orator Sampson, so wo and misfortune were necessarily the consequence.

The first act of their discontent was to abandon their work, and thus throw themselves into a state

of absolute destitution, the second was to appoint a sort of deliberative assembly, into which clamour and vituperation were alone admissible, and the third was to fix upon Orator Sampson, as their president and oracle, his recommendation being,—that he was a scoundrel in grain, but had a loud voice, and could declaim vehemently on topics level with the understanding of his hearers.

Thus qualified, the orator may speak for himself, the scene being an open glade, about a mile distant from the nearest mill, and the audience three or four hundred of the “unwashed.”

“Friends, countrymen and fellow-citizens,—we are met here on a matter o’ life and death (*hear, hear*). Our rights and our bread is taken away by cotton lords, and steam engines, and flesh and blood, canno’ bear it longer (*hear*). It’s no use to argufy the matter, it’s as plain as a pike-staff, it shows itsel’ in your hollow cheeks, it shows itsel’ in your ragged coats, it shows itsel’ in your wives’ old gown’s—and oh! my friends, countrymen, and fellow-citizens, it shows itsel’ in your little childer’s hungry looks (*hear, hear*). We are a free people, for you have all sung—‘Britons never shall be slaves!’ but you are robbed, and treated worse nor slaves by cotton lords—these trample upon you, take the bread out of your mouths, and then build castles, and palaces, and halls. I tell you, friends, countrymen, and fellow-citizens, that the mortar is your blood, and that the stones are your bones; and, let me ask you, what are these cotton lords, that hector and domineer over you?—What are they I say?—Are they a bit better nor yourselves? (*no, no*). We want no steam engines nor mills—and for why?—because we have arms to weave and spin,—and is’n’t a shame a d----d shame, I say, that they take work out of our fingers, and

then bate us till it's no use working.—I say down with the cotton lords and steam engines, down wi' 'em, burn 'em and destroy 'em, and then we shall have good old times back again; then, I say, we shall have beef in our kettles, and ale in our pots, instead of meal-porridge and butter-milk. Down with the cotton lords, my lads! down with 'em!"

These sentiments met with the cordial approbation of his auditors, and the "greasy rogues" threw up their caps, and shouted "Down with the cotton lords!"

This meeting was not a solitary one, in fact the entire rural population of a large and populous district, was discontented and partly starving. Rumour,

"the blunt monster, with uncounted heads,"

had carried tidings of these "sayings and doings," to the manufacturers, and had excited proportionate alarm. Precautionary measures were taken, and Manford as being the richest man amongst them, and as a sequence believed to be the wisest, had been made the organ for conveying information of this threatening state of things to government.

Great was the pride of the Manfords, on the delivery of a packet, sealed with an official seal, marked "Home Department," and indorsed "John Manford, Esq. Factory Hall."

"Well," said Mrs. Manford, "I never know'd such a thing, to be sure. To think of our John having a letter from the 'Secretary of State!' Good gracious, what next?"

This letter was just such a one as is generally received from persons in office,—abundantly oracular, and very little to the purpose. It however

contained a high eulogium upon Mr. Manford's sagacity and prudence; and recommended that the local authorities should be active, that special constables should be sworn in, and further, that military force should be in readiness, provided the civil power was too weak to cope with the emergency. This was all very well for the manufacturers, but did little to abate the distress existing amongst the operatives.

Manford's understanding, and the understandings of his brother "cotton lords," were unfit to govern the crisis; their views were limited to their factory walls, they possessed no knowledge of the bearings of the question, with them it was a mere opposition of brute force to brute force, and as often as they heard of meetings of the operatives, a posse of constables, headed by a neighbouring danderheaded magistrate, was despatched to disperse the starving weavers. This led to a great deal of personal animosity, and slight skirmishes not unfrequently took place, as often indeed as the eloquence of Orator Sampson could screw the courage of his followers to the "sticking point."

The notions entertained by the sufferers themselves were pitifully absurd; had they destroyed every mill then in existence, they would not have been one inch nearer the "good old times," with the ideas of which they allowed themselves to be deluded. They were however rendered desperate, partly by the pressure of want, which is a bad reasoner, and a still worse adviser, and partly by the advices of bad and violent men who served their own purposes by misleading and blinding the popular mind.

Manford was busily engaged in all these measures, and as he was one of those men who are clear headed and shrewd, simply because they

have but one idea, it is natural that when new ones were forced into his head, the old one was for the time displaced. Anne, consequently, was nearly forgotten, and many days passed away, and found her drooping and pining, like a beautiful exotic, in the unnatural and foreign atmosphere of the mill.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CONFLAGRATION.

"Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To its full height.

Henry Fifth.

It was in the depth of the winter of 18—, when the discontented labourers proceeded to put their long threatened violence into effect. The solitary mark of wisdom connected with this proceeding was, that it had strangely enough been kept secret. The blow fell the first upon Manford, who had made himself, of late, particularly obnoxious.

The hands had been at work about an hour, as they began somewhere about five o'clock in the morning, and it was still quite dark, when they were startled by a loud "hurrah," and a shower of brickbats pouring through the windows. Every thing was in a moment in the wildest confusion: the women and children shrieked, the men stormed, swore and shouted, but took no measures to defend their master's property.

The wild hubbub, the acclamations of the misguided mob, and the terrified clamours of the people, roused Manford from his sleep; and on rushing hastily to the window, he saw his magnificent mill already on fire in several places, and his machinery hurled from the windows, amidst the vociferous "hurrahs" of the destroyers. There was little time allowed him for deliberation, as his

alarmed household broke in upon him, exhibiting all the moods of fear.

"We shall be murdered, ravished, ruined, burned—oh, Lord, be gracious to us! Oh John, run, man, send for the soldiers, send for the constables. Oh Lord!—oh Lord!—they're coming here. Oh John, where's your gun—shoot 'em—shoot 'em."

In the midst of this domestic turmoil, Manford became aware that a party of the rioters were approaching the house; indeed, the light from the burning mill now illumined the neighbourhood, and made their motions quite apparent.

Manford had enough of that bull-dog courage which renders men brave, simply because they are insensible to danger; but he felt that flight, in his particular case, would be the better part of valour; and ordering all about him to get out of the way, as fast as possible, he left the house, and was fortunate enough to escape meeting with the excited rabble, as it is more than likely, had they seized him, they would have treated him roughly.

While the proprietor was thus seeking his personal safety, in flight, the work of destruction went on gloriously, in the opinion of the mob. The whole of the immense structure, with its necessary offices, and stock of manufactured goods and of raw material, was in one mass of bright flame—a burnt offering to ignorance and folly. His house, too, was completely gutted, and irreverent hands made a bonfire of old Mrs. Manford's "lion beds," and all the household stuff, in which she had long delighted. The cellars were emptied and their contents transferred into the persons of Orator Sampson and his immediate myrmidons; for Sampson, a Boanerges in council, was "also foremost in the fight," and as day broke gloomily and heavily, the well ordered establishment of Factory

Hall, with its dependences, was a heap of smoking ruins—so rapid had been the work of demolition.

No injury had been sustained by the work-people, in the mill, beyond bruises and blows, and the inevitable mischief sustained by the rush to escape.

So far the rioters had succeeded in their wishes, they had destroyed property to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds, and thought themselves certain to be benefited. They were flushed with triumph, and their numbers increased fast; those whom timidity had kept back, now hastened forward in order to share the spoil. Thus Sampson found himself the leader of a little army, and, like a good general, lost no time, but hastened away to the nearest mill, with the full determination that it should share the same fate as Manford's.

The news of this rising had, however, flown through the country, heightened in its horrors by the blazing mill, which served as a beacon light, to direct assistance. As it always happens in these cases, no official arrangements had been made to meet the storm, though it had been long brooding. The local means at hand were utterly insignificant, when opposed to a determined outbreak; and even these were unorganized and incapable of acting in concert; so that vast property might be said to be at the mercy of an infuriated rabble, without any check upon their destructive propensities. Expresses were, however, sent off, one after another, to the nearest military station, and Manford, and some of his more resolute neighbours, determined to garrison one of the strongest and most defensible mills, which, happened, fortunately, to be the first in the line of the march of the rioters.

These were nothing daunted by the hasty preparations made to resist them, and commenced a simultaneous attack in front and rear. The party

inside, several of whom were armed with guns made the best resistance in their power, and a good many wounds were inflicted. The exasperation of the assailants was momentarily increasing, and it required no ordinary share of courage to hold out. The besieged, however, felt that their lives were at stake, and desperation taught them the tactics of warfare. They resisted like Turks,—the best soldiers behind a wall in the world—and no sooner did the besiegers gain a lodgment in the windows, the doors being well defended by bales of cotton, than they were driven back often sorely wounded.

The contest continued for upwards of an hour; the factory walls were thick, and the spirits of the rioters began to flag. Orator Sampson, like a prudent general, kept out of the thick of the fray, contenting himself with encouraging his followers; till fearing that a farther delay might bring upon them the military before the proper quantum of mischief had been done, he directed their attention to another mill, and the shout arose "Trickle's mill, my lads,—Trickle's mill," and away went the tumultuary host.

This mill was, unfortunately, defenceless, and fell an instant prey to their fury. The check which they had experienced had given time for the summoning of aid; and whispers began to circulate amongst them, that a body of cavalry was approaching. Sampson's influence could not withstand this, and indeed he had sense enough to wish to avoid a collision with so formidable an enemy. He determined, however, to put the best face on the matter, and drew up his bands on a wooded height, which in his military skill, he deemed safe from the attacks of horsemen.

This movement had been scarcely effected when a troop of cavalry appeared, "bloody with spurring." The "pomp and circumstance of war,"

even on such a small scale, effectually shook the nerves of the rioters, and when Colonel C—— ordered his men to dismount, and attack them with their long broad-swords, the first flash of these broke up their discipline, and “sauve qui peut” was the order of the day.

Several of the more active ringleaders were captured in their inglorious flight—but Orator Sampson managed to escape; and thus ended the first attempt of the operatives to restore the “good old times.”

CHAPTER XVII.

MAGISTRATES.

"Now what a thing it is to be an ass."
Tit. Andronicus.

The officer commanding the detachment which had put the foolish people to flight, passed a high eulogium on the gallantry which had been displayed by Manford and his friends. This had indeed saved a vast amount of property, and as John had acted as the adviser as well as leader, he became a hero in a small way.

The female Mansfords had found shelter in the house of a neighbouring proprietor, from the fury of the rabble rout, and great were their lamentations on witnessing the ravages committed at Factory Hall. Poor Mrs. Manford lifted up her voice and wept aloud, till she was comforted by John, who said to her—

"Ne'er mind, we shall be paid for it, and we'll build a grander."

This consolation came home to her troubled spirits, and her anger and dismay vented themselves in no very measured terms on the perpetrators of the mischief. Immediate steps were taken to find them a comfortable home for the time, whilst Manford went about estimating his loss, and calculating insurances and county rates.

The consequence of this outrage, however, fell lightly upon the wealthy manufacturer, in comparison with the work-people; many hundreds of these

were deprived of employment, without any chance of removing their position till the mills were rebuilt ; poverty, idleness, and a poor rate increased ten-fold, produced sad work in the parish, which was years before it fairly recovered itself.

On the day following the memorable event, the incendiaries were taken before the nearest magistrate for examination.—This was one of those worthies who add nothing of dignity to the bench—he was a piece of antiquity, whose sole recommendation for filling that important office of a local magistrate, was, that his father had filled it before him. The office itself is an honourable one, and when held by a man of discretion and intelligence, is a source of many blessings to society; but, when held by bigoted, ignorant and arbitrary characters, it becomes a scourge and a curse, as it lets loose one of those earthly plagues, a sharp lawyer, in the shape of a clerk, a man who battens upon the worst portions of human nature, till he becomes a moral gangreen.

Squire Edwards boasted that in his youth he had been active and strong, and moreover, that he was at that period of his life an uncommonly clever fellow ; this is very possible, but as his bodily powers were diminished, till he was reduced to a gouty valetudinarian, swathed in flannel and doe-skin, so his mental energies had also fallen into the “sere and yellow leaf ;” thus in his—

“reverence and chair days.”

he shone forth as an old man, who had profited nothing by his experience, except in an acquired nicety of appetite, as if men were sent into the world to live like swine, and on going out of it, must have for their epitaph, that written by Sardanapalus for his own tomb-stone—

*“Hæc habeo, quæ edi—quæque exsaturata libido
Hausit: at illa jacent multa et proclara relicta.”*

“Awful times, Mr. Shark,” said the magistrate, speaking to his clerk, as the prisoners were brought in, strongly guarded. “Awful times!—Oh, you wretches!” shaking his clenched hand, “you shall be hanged and gibbeted every one of you.—Mills burnt—houses robbed—and every soul in the township put in bodily fear.—Awful times!—Awful times!”,

At this moment, John Manford and others, who had suffered from the rioters, entered the justice-room, and the case was gone into, after a world of civility had passed between the magistrate and the prosecutors.

Amongst the prisoners was a fine young fellow, who vehemently protested his innocence of the charge brought against him, and who declared that he was carrying his gun, and pursuing his proper vocation, namely, that of game-keeper to Sir John Scarsbrook, when he was pounced upon by the military, whilst in pursuit of the fugitives, and conveyed to prison.

It so happened that one of the manufacturers had been wounded by a buck shot, during the attack made upon them in the mill, and as none of the other prisoners had fire-arms, this young man was too important a victim to be allowed to escape; and both Manford and his friends deposed upon oath, that he was one of the most active assailants; and the wounded man deliberately swore, that he saw him take aim at him, and, therefore his recollection of him was most vivid. On the other hand, the rest of the prisoners, one and all, solemnly declared, that James Smith, such being his name, more generally known by “Jem the Keeper,” was never amongst them at all, either on

that day or at any other time, and other witnesses were at hand, to prove that it was impossible for him to have been at Trickle's mill, at the hour when it was deliberately asserted, he was aiding and abetting the riot.

The magistrate, however, did not deem it needful to attend to these parties. "Bloody wretch! —bloody villain!—away with him—away with him!"—being the only answer made to Jem's appeals.

At this particular juncture, when the officers were on the point of removing the prisoners, for the purpose of their being conveyed to Chester Castle, Sir John Scarsbrook entered the room; he had returned from Scotland the evening previous, and having heard strange and aggravated rumours of the rising of the operatives, he had ridden over from the Hall, to see with his own eyes, and as a magistrate, to take cognizance of the affair.

It was with extreme surprise and regret, that he found his own game keeper implicated in this unhappy transaction, amongst a good many others of his inferior tenantry; of Smith's innocence he felt no moral doubt, as the young man had always borne an irreproachable character; and besides, as there was not the slightest reason, why or wherefore he should have so committed himself. Greatly to the annoyance, therefore, of Justice Edwards, another worthy prop of the law, and of the manufacturers, Sir John insisted upon having the evidence gone into. The conflicting testimony was the most extraordinary part of the business, both parties standing stoutly to the proof.

Sir John hinted that the confusion, and unavoidable excitement of the occasion, might have led the gentlemen into error. This gave great offence.

"Look ye, Sir John," said Trickle, "if so be, as how you means to say, that I did no' see Jem the

Keeper, why I tell you plainly, that you tell a d——d lie!"

"And I say," said John Manford, "as how it's cheating justice, coming in in this fashion, and supporting a set of rascals, who would ha' murdered us if they could."

"Gentlemen," answered Sir John, "I deplore, as much as any one amongst you, the outrage you have suffered, and will assist with all my power to bring the offenders to justice; but surely, when the prisoners are so numerous, there is no occasion to add an innocent man to the list, and innocent I believe Smith to be most certainly."

"He's guilty, I'm sure," said Edwards, "and so there's an end of it; your tag-rag-and-bob-tail witnesses won't do, Sir John, against these wealthy gentlemen, they have sworn it, and it's enough. Clerk, make out his committal!"

"I must protest against this prejudice and anger," said Sir John, "as magistrates it is our duty to protect innocence, as well as to punish guilt, and I will not allow so palpable a perversion of it."

"You wont, Sir John," answered Edwards, puffing in wrath, "we are not to be ridden this way, I tell you, I was on this bench before you were born, and am a wiser man, let me tell you, than you are."

"Aye, aye," vociferated the gentlemen, "the old justice for us, we want no interlopers."

"It is in vain," said Sir John, "I perceive, to argue the point, and I have no way left, but to appeal to higher authority; I will not, if it is in my power to prevent it, see a deserving man consigned to the demoralizing influence of a prison; I am, I confess, surprised at the warmth of prejudice, displayed in this case, it is quite unaccountable to me, and I shall watch the whole proceedings narrowly."

So saying he departed, hurt and mortified at the

treatment he had experienced. He made a careful memorandum of the facts, and instituted a diligent inquiry into the state of the labourers, and was deeply grieved at the sufferings he discovered on the one hand, and of the rashness of the sufferers on the other, and he felt that he had not done his duty, either as a man, or as a magistrate, in living in the midst of such a mass of misery and ignorance, and allowing his rank and station to prevent his being aware of it. His purse was liberally opened, and his advice freely afforded to the distressed operatives; and he stretched the shield of his protection over them, as far as justice would permit, in order to save them from themselves, and from being ridden over by the rough shod anger of the powers called into play against them.

There was, indeed, great occasion for some intelligent and influential man to guard their interests. Fear, and the agitated and uneasy condition of the labourers, drove away all feeling of commiseration and sympathy. A sort of "Cordon militaire" was established round the disturbed districts, and government by a strangely, though by no means unusual perversion of common sense, and of common justice, lent all its energies to punish, without making any effort to ameliorate the condition of the offenders.

It thus happened that Sir John Scarsbrook's humane and just interference was coldly looked upon, and Mr. Justice Overdo, and his wise colleagues, were supported in their stupid belief, of the guilt and conduct of the prisoners.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EFFECTS OF THE RIOT.

"Affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind."

Winter's Tale.

"Men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes."

Cleopatra.

The busy and anxious time which followed the riot, had so engaged the attention of the Manfords, male as well as female, that poor Anne had been absolutely forgotten, and female hate, the most enduring and wakeful of human passions, had, for a time overlooked its victim.

It is possible, indeed, that she would have been left in her obscurity, had not Sir John Scarsbrook, on receiving a letter from his sister, made inquiries after her. Lady Lucy had written him by a government courier, begging him to remove Anne, and place her with her aunt, the Dowager Countess of Elton, to whom she had written her history, and from whose goodness of heart, she was sure that she would treat Anne as if she were a child of her own.

Sir John lost not a moment in proceeding to put her ladyship's wishes into execution. On riding up to the cottage (Anne's former abode) he was surprised to find it metamorphosed into a grimy looking hovel, in front of which were playing three or four squalid children. Its trim trellis-

work, formerly covered with ivy, was in ruins, and its once neat door porch was hung with tattered clothes, placed there apparently for the purpose of drying in the wintry sun.

His inquiry of the slatternly woman, who answered his knock, as to whether Anne was within, was replied to—

“Why, now, if it its our little Anne as you wants, she’s fast asleep i’ th’ cradle.”

“No my good dame, it is not your little Anne—but Anne who lived here some weeks ago.”

“Oh, I suppose as how you means the young woman as once lived here;—I knows nothing about her. My John was put in here by Madam Manford, as he’s the gardner.”

Sir John turned away, and determined to seek Manford, in order to ascertain from him what had become of his once loved protégée.—This, indeed, he felt unwilling to do, as he had had one or two specimens lately of John’s breeding, which had been alike unlooked for and undeserved. But Manford’s mind was changing with his fortunes. He had always been a good deal under the control of his mother and his family, and when to these were added a wife, and the loss of Anne’s influence, some of the best parts of his character were obscured.

He became proud, coarsely proud, fond of his vulgarism, because, being backed by his wealth, it passed current amongst his contemporaries for wit; and some of this he had chosen to bestow upon Sir John Scarsbrook, simply on account that he acted as a man of honour, a man of integrity and a man of feeling. The occasion for this had arisen from the affair of his gamekeeper, whom prejudice and lies had consigned to Chester Castle, as there was the most unequivocal proofs that the man was innocent.

He alighted at the door of a house in which he had been informed the Manfords were at present abiding. Manford was out, but the two Mrs. Manfords received him with prim civility. He had become an especial object of dislike to these two ladies, because he had very coldly declined their intimacy, a thing which a woman never forgives.

"Pray, Mrs. Manford, will you be so good as to tell me, what is become of poor Anne Talbot? Lady Haggerton has written me about her, and she is anxious to relieve Mr. Manford of all farther trouble on her account."

Mrs. Manford fidgetted and primmed, and at last said—

"Well, Sir John, it's very curious, what you quality folk can want wi' a poor girl like Anne. May be, her ladyship wants her for a nurse-maid; now our John winna keep her as a lady."

"I believe Lady Haggerton's intentions regarding this unprotected creature are of the very best and kindest description. Will you favour me with her present address, as I find she has removed from the cottage."

"Why Lord sake, Sir John, I dinna know where she is, only I suppose she's where she should be, for I think she's no great things for my part. I does'na like young women having dukes and baronets running after 'em, that I does'na, Sir John; and, may be, you know more about her than I do, for she was a pert and forward minx, Sir John. But we've pulled her a peg down I assure you, she'll not take your fancy now she works in the factory, I guess."

Ineffably disgusted, and as Mrs. Manford seemed disposed to be loquacious, Sir John abruptly left the house. He pursued his inquiries, however, but could hear nothing of Anne's whereabouts, for the cottagers had been thrown into confusion by

the burning of the mill; many of them had left, and the whole were too mindful of their own immediate distresses to pay much attention to Sir John's querics, a gruff and careless "no," being the general answer.

He wrote, at length, to Manford, begging him, as a man, to have some compassion on the friendless girl—and pointing out the advantages which must result from her being placed under his sister's protection. To this note Manford deigned no reply; he had himself lost sight of Anne, but when thus reminded of her, he sent for Jemmy Dobs, the overlooker, to inquire after her.

Dobs had not yet recovered from the shock of the riot, so that his face had about as much expression in it as that "*d'un mouton qui rêve.*" He answered his master's inquiries with a look of stolid wonder.

"He didna know—he could na tell—the fire had dazed him—but he could go and see."

Accordingly, being better acquainted with the people than Sir John, he soon found out that Anne was living with Nelly Tims, in the cleugh—"very decently and orderly like."

The fire had deprived Anne even of her wretched means of support. She had escaped with the rest, and without personal injury; but the family with which she had been placed absolutely refused to receive her, unless she could pay for her board. In this extremity, and amidst a scene of wild terror and confusion, she sought the house of Nelly, to whom she had done kindnesses, when her prospects and situation were better. Nelly received her gladly, but she was miserably poor, as she earned her scanty support by charring and doing odd work for her neighbours. It was, however, a shelter; and after remaining a few days she turned her little acquirements to account, and the

lovely girl, who had been brought up, as a thing
too precious almost for the

"winds of Heav'n to blow upon,"

became dress-maker to the degraded and poverty stricken wretches, with whom she was condemned to associate. Money she received little or none—but she got food, and Nelly, proud of her lodger, proved an excellent economist. She would fain have made the shrinking girl as merry as herself, for though Nelly was poor, she was a determinedly happy woman—and was one of those curious mortals, who for ever.

"laughs like parrots at a bag-piper,"

but her coarse, though well meant efforts failed to animate the foundling; and Anne's cheek blanched, and she refused to be comforted—although with a woman's passive courage she endured her lot, and bore up under circumstances which would have driven man into reckless desperation.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PLEBEIAN'S VISIT TO LONDON.

"Some strange commotion
Is in his brain."

Henry the Eighth.

The events which have been narrated had excited a considerable sensation, not only in their immediate neighbourhood, but in the breasts of those who had the guiding of the state machine, and it was resolved to institute a sifting inquiry into the cause and probable consequences of the great distress, said to be preying upon large masses of the community; John Manford was therefore summoned to attend a privy council, to be held for the express purpose; this summons he received with some embarrassment, and by way of supporting him, his friends and coadjutors drew up a memorial, stating their views and opinions, to which the officer commanding the troops which had assisted in quelling the riot added a report, speaking in the highest terms of Manford's conduct, and lauding the conduct of the civil power to the skies.

Mrs. Manford insisted on accompanying her husband;—a visit to London was an event of no every day occurrence, and to her, whose farthest peregrination had never reached forty miles from home, it seemed portentous.

A large stock of Sandwiches, and an ample bottle of brandy having been stored up, they prosecuted their journey in the mail, and were finally

deposited safe in limbs, but grievously tired, at the Bull and Mouth, in St. Martin's.

Here Manford took up his temporary abode, and on the following day, fortified with his credentials, he appeared in Downing Street; one of London's disgraceful hackney coaches, being the respectable vehicle, which had carried him from his fashionable hotel to the government office.

Wealth is the "open sesame" to respect in Downing Street, as well as every where else, and Manford was very graciously received by the Lord John's and Lord Charles's of the council board. His statements were attentively listened to, and his auditors were apparently greatly edified, and also highly pleased, they declared, with his business-like and practical views. This part of his morning's work being gone through, he was carried to a levée, and had the high honour of an introduction; and to crown all, the sword of state was brought out, and having been laid upon his shoulders, he was declared to be Sir John Manford, knight!

On his return to the Bull and Mouth, even his wife was struck by the change in his gait; there was a conscious dignity about him, and he strode past her with an oblique look, so full of meaning, that she exclaimed—

"Goodness gracious, John, what's come over thee?"

"Nancy," said he, "I'm not John—I'm Sir John, I tell thee," he continued, as she lifted up her hands and her eyes—"I tell thee, Nancy, that I'm a knight," and having so said, he seated himself, with a degree of dignity that filled Nancy with amazement.

"Gracious me, John, a knight!—And where hast thee been?—Has thee seen the king?"

"I have, Nancy, and he laid his sword over my back, and so I am a knight."

"Good Lord, Johnny?—Wert thee not frightened?—What sort of man is he?"

And so the conversation ran on, till Sir John had "fought his battle o'er again,"—

"And thrice had slain the slain,"

and was not interrupted until the waiter entered, Mrs. Manford having rung the bell. Her order was characteristic:

"Bring Sir John a pint of sherry—and as Sir John is hungry, bring a slice of ham and a roll—and tell boots to come for Sir John's shoes—and be sure to tell the cook, to cook Sir John a nice rump steak for dinner."

Now this titular dignity was exactly the thing to suit a woman of Mrs. Manford's calibre of understanding—it gave a handle, as she called it, to John's name, and made it sound much better. Manford, himself, a changed man, seemed as much pleased as his wife, and she Sir Johned him to his heart's content.

"Lord, John," she said, "must I call thee Sir John, when we're by oursel's, lad, it does sound grand."

"Why thee sees, Nancy, I suppose we shall get used to it—but I think thee'd better."

This event was, however, far too important to be confined to her own breast, and in the course of a few days the following letter was received by her coterie of country confidants:

"One of the most astonishingest things has happened as ever was know'd—our John is made a knight, and must be called, by the king's orders, Sir John Manford—only think how

grand it will sound—it's quite turned my head topsy-turvy. And then we've seen such a power of fine people, that I really begins to think, London's the only place for great folks, like Sir John and me. Only here nobody knows any thing about one, and Sir John had his hat knocked over his eyes and pocket picked, as we were coming from the theatre last night—only think, what impudence. We've been to a grand man, called an artist, to have our likenesses taken, both in one frame, and it is to have written on it—These are Sir John Manford and his Lady," it will look mighty grand in our new house. I hopes that they are getting on with it—and that they will take care to have the kitchen near at hand. We shall be down next week, and come in our new carriage, with the arms of the Manfords and the Nortons painted on it, and hung round wi' curtains, which they calls supporters. Sir John desires his kind love to his mother, and hopes this will find you in good health, as it leaves us at present, and so no more from your

"Obedt. humble servant,

"NANCY MANFORD.

*Bull and Mouth, room No. 4. March, 18—."

Sir John and his wife having "lionized" through the modern Babylon, on the week following, prepared to return to their native parish. The new carriage—that is an old one new painted—most splendidly emblazoned, was put into requisition, and on the second day after their departure from London, they were receiving the congratulations and compliments of their acquaintances, amongst whom there was a vast deal of "screwing of backs," and screwing of faces to fit themselves to the consequence of the new knight. He, on his part, behaved with a graciousness of demeanour,

which his neighbour Trickle declared "to be the right thing, and in the regular quality fashion," and old Mrs. Manford was so overjoyed, that she let fall tears,

"Such as tender mothers shed."

and imbibed so copiously of brandy and water, that it was found needful, in order to put a stop to her weeping delight, to carry her to bed.

The Nortons, who felt that a portion of "honour's skirt" had brushed over them, determined to give a grand ball, to celebrate the event, at which were to be present every body in the remotest degree connected with them, who were not poor. Vast preparations were at once set on foot, in which the Manfords were cordial co-operators. Notes of invitation were written, and of course accepted. The officers of the regiment quartered in the place were invited, and it was fully determined to make a most brilliant affair of it.

CHAPTER XX.

BALL PREPARATIONS.

"Genius loci."

Though Mrs. Manford entered vigorously into the arrangements to be made for the ball, she sorely grudged that it was to take place before her new house was ready. There was no help for it, and so she condoled herself with the idea, that when Factory Hall was rebuilt, she would give another ball, that should eclipse all that had gone before it. With this mental resolution she was satisfied, and the important day came. She had taken upon herself the entire arrangement, because, as she argued "she had been in London, and, therefore, must know how to do it in style."

Early in the morning the two Mrs. Manford and the three Misses Manford removed themselves in a body to the house of Mr. Norton, followed by Jem, loaded with a most bulky cargo of bandboxes, in which were placed the fineries for the evening; the ladies having visited Mrs. Brown for the occasion. Jem shrugged up his shoulders, as one by one the boxes were fixed on his person; and as he staggered under his load, sung to himself the fag end of an old rustic ballad—

"The devil take bows and furbelows."

Norton's house underwent a regular ransacking; and what with scrubbing, brushing, dusting, and other et ceteras, the lady-hostesses gave themselves a tolerable breathing. Beds and chairs that lately looked quakerlike, in their coverings of gray holland, now stood forth in glowing crimson; and the Brussels carpets one more showed their faces. Every thing being declared in apple-pie order in the house, the dancing-room was the next object of attention. Norton's house, though a tolerably spacious one, had no room at all commensurate in size with the expected dancing throng; fortunately, however, the house abutted upon the mill, looking something like a pigmy in the embrace of a giant; and they determined to convert a spare room in it, used for storing away waste cotton, into their "salle à danser." The only objection to this scheme was, that it was far from being "redolent of sweetness," in fact, it smelt abominably—and it required scrubbing, and whitewashing, and ventilating, before even the cotton nobility could reconcile themselves to it,

The walls of this elegant and tasteful apartment were appropriately decorated with a multitude of tin sconces; and at either extremity there was placed a large laurel-tree, having oranges and apples ingeniously suspended in them, "looking, for all the world," as Miss Norton declared, "just like natur." This was a fancy of Mrs. Manford's, and was reckoned the "chef-d'œuvre" of the day.

The next important division of their labours was to arrange the eatables and drinkables; and it was here the plebeians showed profusion, if they did not show any particular nicety of idea. They looked upon this day as one—

"big with the fate of pasties and of pies,"

and the larder and dining-room presented a glorious display of decanters and dishes. Here old Mrs. Mansford was in her element; she marshalled long files of wine bottles, backed by a goodly show of rum and brandy holders, for making the—

"Liquor that she lov'd,"

namely—punch, a favourite beverage amongst the ladies of the district; who esteemed it far above wine, as a stimulant to enable them to dance with that degree of energy, which came up to their notions of graceful agility. Judging from the quantities provided, there seemed to be no reason for supposing, that there would be any lack of spirits among the visitors, to enable them to go through the evening with becoming vigour.

These multifarious labours were, at length, brought to a close, just as the shades of evening began to show themselves; and as their cards of invitation had appointed eight o'clock for the hour of reception, the ladies thought it time to begin to decorate themselves, in order that their persons might appear in unison with their apartments. Mrs. Brown had indeed done her part to admiration, and as the different articles were brought under review, it was unanimously agreed, "that they should all be as fine as queens."

The taste, indeed, displayed by these refined ladies, was not at all in accordance with the duke's advice to Juliana—

" I'll have no glittering gew-gaws stuck about you,
To stretch the gaping eyes of idiot wonder,
And make men stare upon a piece of earth
As on the star wrought firmament—no feathers
To wave as streamers to your vanity—
Nor cumbrous silk, that with its rustling sound
Makes proud the flesh that bears it."

In truth, the ladies were neither young nor handsome, so that had they been modestly attired, with—

“A half-blown rose, stuck in their braided hair,
With no more diamonds than their eyes were made of.
No deeper rubies than compos'd their lips,
Nor pearls more precious than inhabit them,”

they would have been any thing but charming; indeed, in the last particular, more than one of the bevy were absolutely wanting.

However there was no fear on this head—feathers, as we have before seen, were especial objects of regard; and after their “waving locks” had undergone the proper amount of brushing, a “panoply of plumes” nodded upon each half-robed damsel; and Phœbe declared that her head “felt just like a pin-cushion.”

Time flew rapidly—the ladies indulged themselves in a gossiping cup of tea; and now nothing remained to be done but to make their final arrangements for receiving the company. Mrs. Manford, senior, took charge of the tea-table—Mrs. Manford, junior, placed herself near the door—Miss Norton was in the kitchen superintending half a dozen servants, all busily at work in making toast, and bread and butter—beef and lamb were roasting, and the whole place was in a throng of business. The three Misses Manford were disposed in different parts of the rooms. Mrs. Norton was vis-à-vis with Mrs. Manford, junior, and the Misses Norton were placed one on each side of the fire-place—whilst Manford, who had now joined them, and who was to act as master of the ceremonies, paraded the drawing-room—dressed à la Manford—that is, a blue coat, with enormous metal buttons, a pair of kerseymere shorts, white

stockings, substantial shoes, a marcella waistcoat, made with flaps, and a cravat of ample dimensions.

Every thing being thus "in statu quo," expectation was alive, and just as the clock struck eight, a distant sound was heard, resembling the rumbling of a baggage train. Near and more near came the sound, and a cortège slowly wound its way along the narrow lane leading to the house, that would have astonished the very paving stones of St. James' Square.

Punctuality was a thing of course, the most distant of the invited, in all directions, had set out pretty early, and as they proceeded on their way, they were joined by others, whose houses lay in their track, till these various trains had become concentrated as they neared their place of destination. Caravans, market-carts, and farming carts were the magnificent chariots used by the visitors —some covered, some uncovered, but all thronged with people quite as grand as the Manfords and Nortons themselves.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PLEBEIAN BALL.

What a coil's here!"

Shakespeare.

Carriage after carriage disgorged its contents, and the parties were one after another announced by Jem in a most vociferous strain. Most of these were of the "illustrious obscure," who are, as yet, "unsung by fame," comprising their immediate neighbours, and grocers, drapers and tallow-chandlers from the surrounding hamlets. The ball had been spoken of in such grandiloquent terms, that all were on the tip-toe of expectation ; and the formidable preparations made to receive them, gave a foretaste of coming splendour, quite overpowering.

Meanwhile the "posse comitatus," in the drawing-room, was fully on the alert; and when the ladies had stripped off their outward coverings, and the gentlemen had adjusted their stocks, duos and trios made their entré in rapid succession. Sir John Manford acted as "maitre de mode," and the two senior ladies had soon sufficient occupation in catering for the keen appetites of the company—it being a standing rule, to come hungry and to make the most of the "goods the gods provide," on such an occasion.

It would be impossible to describe, or rather it would be incredible were it to be told, how many cups of tea were drank by the ladies—and how many slices of bread and butter, and toast were

eaten by the gentlemen. If it were not a feast of reason it was, at least, a feast of hunger. Cut and come again was evident'y the motto inscribed on the stomachs of the visitors, and the half dozen maid servants had more than enough to do to replenish the plates, which were continually sent out empty. Symptoms of repletion were at length, however, apparent, the ladies began to wipe their mouths and their foreheads,—and the gentlemen showed signs of sociality, by gathering together in knots, and discussing the state of the nation. Sir John Mansford's recent visit to London, and his interview with lords and secretaries, and heaven knows what beside, made him, at once, a man of authority on all points; he was therefore in great request, and as he perambulated from group to group, he got Sir John'd to some purpose.

The great "lions" of the evening were not as yet, however, arrived;—these were the entire mess of the —th regiment, stationed in the immediate neighbourhood. Symptoms of anxiety and impatience began to display themselves amongst the female division of the company, especially in its younger portions; and various whispers were in circulation, such as the following—"Dear-a-me, sure they will come." "Do you think they will bring their swords?" "Eh, but suppose they come in their spurs—what a rumpus they'll make in our flounces!"—and sundry other equally characteristic remarks.

Now the military gentlemen, had, hitherto, seen little of the lady part of this community; they were, however, familiar enough with the outsides of the many excellent houses they dwelled in; and had formed their notions of their appearance and manners, from these erroneous indices. They were a fashionable set of men—the regiment being a

"crack" one—some of them aristocrats, and all well born and well educated.

The tea-things were kept in order, till the patience of the expectants had nearly evaporated, amidst the steam of two tremendous tea-urns, that were seething and bubbling upon the tables, when, at length, a loud knock, and the hoarse voice of Jem, bellowing "The Hofficers," set the hearts of the ladies in motion, and quieted their tongues. Manford hastily resumed his proper station, and as the gentlemen came in, severally announced them, as Colonel, Sir John Morton—Major, the Honourable Frederick Augustus de l'Epée—Captain Ashcroft—and so on: the ladies, in a body, rose and curtsied—and old Mrs. Manford called out—

"Pray do come to your tea, as the fiddlers are just striking up,—'Come haste to the wedding.' Lord bless us, gentlemen, how late you are," she continued, "why I'm nearly melted; and all the young lasses are sitting on pins."

The Colonel, the Honourable Major, and the rest lifted up their eyebrows, at seeing the preparations, and very politely declined. This was a signal for a universal scuffle;—the ladies, in a body, hurried to the ball-room, followed by the gentlemen, so that the soldiers were "left alone in their glory," with Sir John Manford, two or three ancient dames, whom rheumatism and the pains and penalties of old age had robbed of activity.

As they were preparing to follow the rout, one of these venerables begged the Honourable Frederick Augustus de l'Epée, to lend her his arm—

"For," said she, "I'm so mighty fond of dancing; and our Nelly and John are reckoned about the best hornpipers in the country."

Charity as well as politeness softened the steel heart of the gay de l'Epée, who muttered to Ashford, as he paced on with his burden—

"Hornpipers!—what the devil does the old woman mean?"

"'Pon my honour, Major, I don't know;—some kind of dance I should fancy; for, from the noise in advance, I should be led to believe that there were a number of bears, in clogs, dancing," and so saying, the sententious captain curled his whiskers round his fingers.

The music had roused the flagging spirits of the visitors, and when the officers entered the ball-room, they found its entire length occupied by a double line of dancers; and "change sides and back again,"—"right and left,"—"four hands across," echoing backwards and forwards, amidst loud laughter and noisy joking. Manford immediately sought out partners for them; and in a few minutes brought Miss Trickle, junior, and Miss Martha Jenkins, the beauties of their circle, and presented the one to the colonel, and the other to the major, leaving them immediately, to accommodate the rest of the party.

After the usual bow and curtsey had been exchanged, and the ladies were seated, the colonel and the major looked rather blank, and the latter whispered, as they leaned over the chairs of their partners,—

"In the name of wonder, colonel, what are we to do?"

"Do!" answered he, good humouredly, "why, play the boy, and have a frolic; we have no other chance, as we are fairly caught by these New Zealanders."

"Excellent idea, colonel, fore-gad,—capital, well, it will be excellent sport."

The whisper passed through the group; and the young men, throwing off their "style," laughed heartily; and one of them seeing the punch bowl already circulating, exclaimed—

"Bacche! Oh Bacche!"

"Good me," whispered Miss Trickle, to Miss Dobs, "just hear,—why he's asking for bacca— who'd have thought it!"

The ice being broken, the gallant corps became mad-caps; and with boyish enthusiasm entered into the spirit of the scene. Manford had provided them all with partners, and they placed themselves rank and file, to the tune of "Drops of Brandy."

"Eyes right," shouted a bluff sub. "Eyes left," echoed another. "To the right, wheel," said the major; and away they went in a stirring country dance,—alternately laughing and stumbling against their neighbours, as they scrambled through the figure.

"Well," said Ashford, "I once danced with a company of Hottentots, at the Cape, but, 'pon honour, their muscular exertions were but trifling, when compared to those of these poor people. What a galaxy of red faces and red arms. Oh, here comes the punch bowl:—pledge me, comrades,—and let us do honour to our entertainers."

Their partners, however, claimed some attention. Compliments were paid—punch and cake duly administered—and a little familiarity began to grow up between the parties, notwithstanding the dissonance of their habits.

The Honourable Major, who was something of a wag, recited, in a pompous tone, to Miss Dobs, after some very touching compliments—

"Dans tous les temps, bien reg d'une belle
Et dans les camps, redoutable guerier,
Dans un boudoir, et dans une querelle,
Toujours mon front fut ceint d'une laurier."

"Oh me!" she whispered to her mother, who was seated beside her, "he's talking Latin."

"Talking Latin!" echoed the mother, *sotto voce*,

"Lord-a-mercy, Martha, who ever heard such a thing ;—and just look at his waist, how he is screwed."

Meanwhile the rest of the jovial party were in high glee ;—Mrs. Mansford, senior, had fastened herself upon the colonel, and gave him a full and particular history of "her John's being made a knight."

"And you must know, cornil," she continued, "as how it's my belief as he'll be made a lord—he's got so very 'cute, and has such a power of money. If poor old honest John could but peep out of his grave, and see him, he'd go mad with joy ; for you must know as how Sir John was his pet-lad, though he was then quite a natral, and would na wear hat nor coat. Isn't it very wonderful—just look at him, as he dances with his wife—doesn't he look well as a knight ?"

How far the old lady's garrulity might have carried her is uncertain : but, luckily, at this moment, the punch-bowl, in its course of circulation, reached her, and under cover of a brimming glass, the gallant colonel made his escape. And now—

"The mirth grew 'fast and furious.'"

and the military became great favourites, and flirted with the ogling girls, till their awe wore off; and laughter and repartee, not always the most refined, were the order of the day. The gentlemen got elevated, as the good wine did its good office, and the rules of decorum were most sadly put to the blush.

Supper came in due time, and not before it was wanted. The ladies had jumped and ambled till, they declared that, they could jump and amble no longer, and the gentlemen had stamped and vaulted, till Sir John Mansford swore roundly, that he'd

got a Yorkshire thirst upon him, and “that he was both hungry and dry.”

Abundant means were on the board so satisfy both these wants, and due honour was done to them. The military guests having thrown off their fastidiousness, and being highly amused, shared in the conviviality, and made, what the major declared to be—

“A very good dinner, only it was abominably cooked.”

The party returned to the ball-room in renovated strength and spirits; Manford, and one of his brother compotators, carried the two laurel trees, which had hitherto stood at each extremity of the room, into the middle of it; and the whole company joining hands danced round them in a circle. Chairs began to be overthrown—Mrs. Manford, senior, had been alternately laughing and crying for some time, and so on, from one extravagance to another, till far in the night; when they severally wended their way homewards, and the officers beat up their quarters about day-break singing

“Early to bed, and early to rise,
Is the way to be healthy, wealthy and wise.”

and so ended the plebeians’ ball.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TRIAL—PLEBEIAN IDEAS OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

“He’s honest, on mine honour.”
Henry Eighth.

During all this rejoicing and “growing greatness,” amidst his plebeian neighbours, Sir John Scarsbrook had remained at Vale Hall; partly on account of the approaching trial of his gamekeeper, for his alleged riotous, and even murderous conduct—partly on account of the oppressions which were practised upon the starving population—and partly, too, from anxiety on account of the lost Anne. The delicacy and purity of his feelings towards her, made him shrink however from the coarse imputations which met him, whenever his uneasiness led him to inquire after her.

He had written an account of her singular disappearance to his sister, and was much relieved, on finding she proposed returning, shortly, to Vale Hall. Lady Haggerton’s health had suffered, in consequence of an accident which had befallen them near Lyons; their carriage having been overturned, and his lordship, for some minutes been exposed to the most imminent peril. The shock had been too great for her, and she had determined to return in place of prosecuting their journey, as at first proposed; as she had persuaded herself, that Spring, and a quiet residence at the Hall would restore her shattered health. She felt, too, anxiously uneasy about the foundling; and this feeling, no

doubt, came in to aid her resolution. His lordship had fortunately escaped any serious injury, and willingly coincided with his lady's wishes. Their letter to Sir John signified that they would be at Vale Hall in the course of the month.

The trial of Jem Ward, the keeper, at length came on, at the Chester assizes. There was a good deal of excitement in the public mind on the occasion; and though an English jury is as fair a judicial tribunal as can be found, men's opinions are more or less swayed by popular impressions; and thus the current of prejudice set strongly against the prisoners. Sir John Scarsbrook's well-meant and humane interference, had, oddly enough, called down the suspicion of "the powers that were;" who seemed incapable of believing, that a man could do right, simply because it was right; and, hence, imputed his conduct, however honourable and praiseworthy in itself, as an act of interference between the constituted authorities, and a disaffected and murmuring population.

On the day of trial, he attended in court, and brought with him a host of witnesses, besides aiding himself by the most eminent counsel. He could not appear, indeed, as advocate for Ward's companions, as their own admission of riotous behaviour, precluded any chance of escape, unless, indeed, by some legal quibble, of which he would have scorned to avail himself. Ward was indicted with the rest, and a very lengthened examination of witnesses took place.

The impression, obviously, in court was, that he was guilty; though several very respectable people swore positively to having seen him, more than once, pursuing his usual course of business, in Bream's Wood, early on the morning in question; the said wood being not less than three miles distant from the scene of outrage. The evidence

given in his favour, in all other respects, was exceedingly favourable, and described him as being always noticed for the correctness and general propriety of his behaviour. This was corroborated by Sir John Scarsbrook himself, who stated, that he had been brought up in his family, and that he was his own personal attendant on all sporting occasions. The counsel, too, in a pointed speech, called the attention of the jury to the absolute contradictions in the evidence; still the incredulous air of judge and jurymen satisfied him that a verdict must go against his client, unless some discrepancy could be wrung out of the prosecutors, by cross-examination. In fact, the testimony given in his favour was doubted, if not disbelieved; the court thinking, apparently, that the "esprit de corps" was at the bottom of it, in place of fact. It was a reasonable conclusion, perhaps, but it was, nevertheless, a false one.

Mr. Trickle was the chief witness against him, though corroborated by his brother manufacturers. On coming into the witness box, his examination was conducted by Counsellor S—.

" You positively swear, Mr. Trickle, to the identity of the prisoner at the bar, and that he fired the shot by which you were wounded?"

" Yes, I do,—I swear it was him, and nobody else."

" You were," said the counsel, looking at a map, " standing at a window on the ground floor of your own mill, and defending your property against the attack of rioters. In what position did Ward, the prisoner, stand, when he fired at you;—you saw him clearly, I suppose?"

" To be sure I did, I see'd him as plain as the sun at noon-day;—he was standing before me, on the outside of the mob. I see'd him aim, and try'd to get away, but Mr. Manford and the rest were

behind me, and so I could na stir—I see'd the flash, and then he walked away with the gun over his shoulder."

"Your wound was in the shoulder, I believe, the ball passing into the fleshy part—and, indeed, if I am rightly informed, still remaining there. You saw Ward fire at you distinctly—and, according to your statement, he stood right before you?"

"Just so—the ball's in sure enough—he stood right in front of me."

Manford, and several other persons, repeated the same story in substance, all averring that they could see the gun, and see, too, that the man took deliberate aim.

"The case seems very clear, Mr. S——," said the learned judge, and the jury murmured the same opinion.

"I agree with your lordship, that it does, but with your permission, my lord, we will call Mr. Bartley, an eminent surgeon, and Mr. Bridgeman, a very able army surgeon, and one well acquainted with gun-shot wounds."

His lordship bowed acquiescence.

These scientific gentlemen having been shown the plan, and Trickle having placed himself before the window, and pointed out the relative positions of Ward and himself, they begged to examine the wound. This wish was complied with. It was in the fleshy part of the shoulder, and was hardly yet cicatrized.

His deposition was repeated, and they both, at once and unequivocally declared, that the gun-shot wound could not have been inflicted by a person placed as Trickle had sworn Ward to have been. An examination of the wound satisfactorily proved this. A small bullet had entered the outside of the shoulder, and could be felt in the fore and inside, near the neck; and it was obvious that it

must have been fired from a gun, placed obliquely, and to the right side of the wounded man, at right angles, indeed, with the spot indicated by Trickle, as having been occupied by the prisoner;—and there was nothing intervening, which could by any possibility have caused a ball to deflect from its direct course.

This was unanswerable, and Ward was acquitted ; and thus one life, at least, was saved by Sir John Scarsbrook's exertions.

The manufacturers were furious, and loudly proclaimed, that the whole defence had been trumped up by the baronet, and that the witnesses were forsworn ; another instance, among the thousands on record, how widely men's judgments and actions are swayed by a sense of private wrong.

CHAPTER XXIII.

POVERTY AND TEMPTATION.

"Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are increased or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice—but adversity doth best discover virtue." *Bacon.*

Sir John Manford's mill, and Factory Hall were in course of rebuilding with all possible despatch;—but while they were in progress, the poor foundling, in conjunction with the rest of the operatives, suffered extreme privations. Winter and early Spring had passed slowly and heavily away, and Anne's cheek had become thinner and thinner week after week.

The cottagers had been forced to sell or pawn most of their furniture and dress, in order to eke out the scanty dole provided by the poor rate; so that although Anne's services were now and then in requisition, to fit the diminished stock of wearables, repayment was scanty, or, in too many instances, nothing. She strove to increase her means by teaching the younger children, but this attempt proved quite abortive; as poverty, and its accompanying recklessness, made the parents absolutely indifferent.

Nelly Tims still laughed and did her best; her resources were, however, equally crippled with those of her lodger, so that, at length, to avoid absolute famine, she was compelled to apply to the overseer. Two or three months had passed since Anne had seen Manford; he had, indeed, nearly

if not altogether forgotten her, or if he ever did think of her, his thoughts were confined to his own breast and produced no results. She knew not of Sir John Scarsbrook's inquiries after her, or she would have ventured to the Hall.

By Nelly's urgent entreaties she occasionally took exercise in the narrow sheltered walk leading through the dingle, in which their little cottage stood. Here it was her evil fate to be met by Major Sir A. de l'Epée, and two or three more of his brother officers. Her striking beauty of contour and feature could not be hidden even by her humble garb; and the major, like many other men of the world, thinking that female honour, and female virtue, are things scarce worthy of being regarded as social virtues, rudely, though politely, addressed her.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air,"

exclaimed he, as he approached the bashful and timid girl; who shrank away, and endeavoured to pass him, as he stood smiling and peering in her face.

"Ah! my pretty lily of the valley," he continued, "how came such a piece of exquisite female workmanship to be placed here—a Grecian statue in a bear garden—eh, Ashford?"

"True," replied Ashford, "very true 'pon honour," eyeing her through his glass, "almost a Titania, except as to height—but Titania wrapped in a kitchen towel!"

"Pray, my sweet daisy," continued de l'Epée, "in what recess of the wilderness does it please you too vegetate?"

Poor Anne was utterly confounded at the cool and civil impudence, of the group which intercepted her path;—her fearful eye glanced first on one

speaker then on another, and as they filled with tears, the major, whether stirred by some better emotion, or feeling the unmanliness of thus harassing a beautiful and unprotected creature, made way, and Anne sprung forward like a terrified fawn.

"So swift Camilla scours the plain,"

said he, "a very charming girl—I wonder how the devil she got here—why she's a very pearl to the women we have yet seen."

From this time forward Anne's walks were circumscribed to the walls of the cottage, and she was subjected to the continual annoyance of one or other of these gentlemen, calling or strolling round the neighbourhood. Nelly who answered their knocks, was quite won over by their gay and gallant bearing, and wondered Anne refused to see much less to speak to them.

"Oh, lord, Anne," she would say, "how fine they be, and what a sight of gould they have on their shoulders!"

Now Nelly was miserably poor, and she either would not, or could not see any impropriety in Anne's receiving the "gentry," as she called them. Nelly had never read Shakspeare, but Shakspeare had read human nature—he said—

"gold
Thou ever fresh, young, lov'd and delicate wooer,
Whose blush does thaw the consecrated snow,
That lies on Dian's lap!"

and so it proved with Nelly; she smiled and curtseyed, and eventually, spite of Anne's tears and remonstrances, she admitted the major.

If Shakspeare had read one page of the human heart, he had also read another. The chaste wife

in the "Winter's Tale," was not purer minded than Anne, and the handsome and insinuating major, was received with a marked coldness, that taught him to believe her honour to be "a derivative from Heaven," and though famine and despair were in her look, the holiness of innocence preserved her mind from yielding to the "subtle poison" either of gold on the one hand, or flattering speeches on the other.

Well did the poet say, that—

"The sharded beetle hath a safer hold,
Than has the full-wing'd eagle;"

a woman in the lowliness and simplicity of her heart, so long as she relies upon herself, the passive fortitude with which she is endowed, serves her as "armour of proof," and carries her in triumph through trials, in which man's boasted moral courage leaves him stranded and helpless. Thus Anne's purity and simple-mindedness, made her more than a match for poverty and love, for the major talked of love—

"Ye gods, how he did talk,"

and strove by the most delicate and scrupulous behaviour, to win a way to her heart.

The persecution, however, was too much for her; her health began to suffer, and she determined, at all hazards, to fly to Vale Hall, despair making her forgetful of every thing but self-preservation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A RECOVERY.

“Hush’d be that sigh—be dry that tear—
Cease boding doubt—cease anxious fear !
Dry be that tear !”

Sheridan.

Lord and Lady Haggerton arrived at Vale Hall early in May. Scarsbrook received his sister with great affection, as she looked pale, agitated and ill.

“Oh, John,” she said on alighting, “I am delighted to come to you once again—I have felt better since I entered the park, than I have done since that terrible accident. It so shook and unnerved me, that I am like an ‘aspen leaf,’ and am agitated and alarmed by mere nothings; I am sure the quiet and repose of the Hall will do me good.

The accident to which she alluded happened, as we have already said, near Lyons. The carriage, a low, open, travelling one, was descending a moderate declivity, when the horses, from some unexplained cause, grew restive, and, after prancing and plunging for a time, the postillion lost all command over them, and they set off at a furious gallop. In this mad career the off fore wheel of the carriage came in contact with a stone cross, erected by the road side, and, by the concussion, the countess was thrown some yards on the hill side, and

the earl into the midst of the horses. Here her ladyship had the agony to see him tossed about in the traces, and to all appearance doomed to inevitable destruction. Fortunately, by a sudden plunge, he was jerked into the road, and to add to her horror, the broken carriage dashed over him, leaving him senseless or dead. There was no aid near, and her own fall and her mortal fear chained her, for a few seconds, to the spot. On reaching him, and kneeling over him, she discovered he still breathed; and having raised his head on her lap, and called passionately on his name, he had opened his eyes and looked on her with that look of enduring affection, which sinks for ever into a woman's soul. Her pitiable condition happily was not of long continuance, as the postillion speedily returned, having escaped being harmed, and bringing with him the necessary succour. His lordship, though severely bruised, was found on examination to have received no dangerous injury. The countess, when the excitement of the moment was gone, sunk into a succession of fainting fits, exceedingly alarming; and had ever since remained in a state of nervous irritability, which she in vain endeavoured to conquer.

On the morning following their arrival, her ladyship addressed a note to Mrs. Manford, entreating her, as a matter of kindness to herself, to let her know what had become of the foundling. To this very polite note, in the course of the day, she received the following very polite answer—

“ YOUR LADYSHIP,

“ I knows nothing at all in this blessed world of the foundling. The last news I

Thus blighting, in his wild caprice, the blossoms of her youth.
And sad it is, in griefs like these, o'er visions lov'd and lost,
That the truest and the tenderest hearts must always suffer
most."

"For God's sake," said Sir John, "my dear Lucy, cease your melancholy anticipations. It is impossible that such a creature can have been sent into the world, with no higher destinies than you think of. If human aid has failed her," he continued, "He who 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' would surely watch over her."

A great part of the day was passed in conversation of a similar nature; her ladyship's low and nervous state leading her to recur to it continually; and she resolved, notwithstanding her weakness, to visit the cottages personally in a day or two, in order to satisfy herself regarding Anne.

Whilst these noble individuals were thus anxiously thinking of her, the foundling had left Nelly's cottage, and had been hovering near the hall, for a great part of the day. She felt an invincible repugnance to making herself known, nor was it till she saw Lady Haggerton's low pony-phæton, with its beautiful and well remembered horses, brought round to the hall door that she summoned courage to approach.

The countess was preparing for an airing, when the footman announced, that a poor girl wished to see her ladyship.

"Some one of the starving and pauperized operatives, most probably," said Sir John, who was standing beside her. "Let her have some refreshment, William, and Lady Haggerton will speak to her as she proceeds to the carriage."

"Oh no, John—let her come here, poor creature, your account of the sufferings they have endured makes me anxious to play the Lady Bountiful on a large scale."

The man returned, ushering in a girl shabbily but cleanly dressed, with a large slouching straw-bonnet, partly hiding her face. She advanced timidly and trembling towards Lady Lucy, who said, in a kind and compassionate voice—

“What can I do to assist you, my poor girl?”

As the suppliant raised her head, her eyes met her ladyship's, who exclaimed—

“Gracious heaven—Anne!”

The foundling sunk on her knees, and wept as if her heart would break, whilst Sir John hung over her, little less affected than his sister.

CHAPTER XXV.

"The meanest flow'ret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him—are opening Paradise."

Gray.

Anne's simple and affecting narrative was soon told, and it called forth the sympathies of her auditors, and endeared her still more to them. When she retired for the night, she felt that glow of exquisite happiness which her change of circumstances was so well calculated to inspire in a susceptible mind ; and as she breathed her prayers, to the "giver of all good things," the names of her benefactors were not forgotten.

Her presence, too, seemed to act as a cordial upon Lady Lucy's spirits, and this diffused gladness through the hall. She proved a most assiduous and solicitous nurse, ministering equally to the mind and the body ; and her own affections seemed to expand, as she watched over the shattered health of her friend.

The foundling's cheek, too, soon began to resume its original bloom, her step regained its elasticity, and her eye again beamed with delight. She poured out to her noble entertainers all her heart; and as she hovered perpetually round Lady Lucy, it seemed to Sir John Scarsbrook and the earl, that she was sent expressly to fulfil the grateful task, so gracefully and so tenderly did she perform its duties.

"Come," said her ladyship, one smiling May-

morning, I feel so much better, that we will walk forth into the most beautiful and most magnificent of God's temples—a rich country clad in the freshness of Spring.

The party was at once arranged, and they walked out into the beautiful domain surrounding the hall. The day was pre-eminently lovely, and as they slowly pursued their way, they had abundant sources of amusement;—now descanting on the minor gems of the vegetable kingdom,—then gazing, with delighted admiration, on some glorious assemblage of blossoms, each breathing its own perfume, till the air was surcharged with odour,—or seated on some green and sunny knoll, beneath the shade of a patriarchal oak or beech-tree, through which Swept the Spring breeze—

“making sweet music whilst the young leaves danced.”

In this “pleasant mood,” they reached a wooded knoll, on the highest point of the grounds, and sitting down, looked on the panorama around them, with varied but gratified feelings. Her ladyship and Anne were eloquent in their praise of its beauty, Anne in particular, whose delight knew no bounds, for to her gratified senses, it appeared that heaven had—

^{“strewed}
A baptism on the flowers,”

The clearness of the atmosphere, at some distance to the right, was obscured by dark clouds of smoke, and the eyes of Anne were fixed upon them as if they were objects of painful reminiscence.

“Yes,” said Sir John, reading her looks, “there are the mills of Manford and others, sending up their “sulphurous blackness,” to dim the fair face of nature. How much it is to be regretted, that

the works of man are so often at variance with the localities in which they are placed, and that they should root up and destroy every thing that is lovely about them.

"It is very true," continued the earl—"that man does sometimes sacrifice beauty to utility, and, perhaps, in nothing more strikingly, than in the destruction of a fine and romantic district, for the purpose of manufacture; but we have all, except Anne, seen examples that his taste can heighten and improve the character of scenery, even where the scenery is intrinsically lovely,—witness our sojourn at Tivoli. Who can view the fragments of temples and villas, without acknowledging the exquisite taste which selected their sites, and the no less admirable skill displayed in their structure? Reft and ruined as they are, how finely they harmonize with and beautify the landscape."

"And yet," said Lady Lucy, "how much of the pleasure we felt was owing to reminiscences. Beautiful as every thing is, the placid gracefulness of the temple of Vesta, the dark and foaming cataract, the olive groves, the wide Campagna, the "deep blue sea," all are beautiful, and would be so, even if divested of the memories that dwell around them;—yet how greatly is the pleasure heightened, how much more intense is our admiration, when aided by the sanctity that must ever hallow a spot, which has been the chosen dwelling-place of the great, the noble and the generous!"

"I have often," said Sir John, "thought that the fragmentary beauties of its temples and palaces are even more touching than they could have been in their finished splendour, and when inhabited by the poets, the philosophers, and the statesmen of Imperial Rome. Do they not come with greater power over the eye and the imagination, than if they had been seen when occupied by a Piso or Catullus?"

Now, when little is left of their temples, save broken columns and prostrate entablatures, when nothing can be learned beyond traditional tales of their chosen haunts ; it seems as if nature had retaliated upon man, by overthrowing his most elaborate creations,—and by making them subsidiary to her own undying and unchanging beauties—and converting his fading and evanescent productions, into materials for enriching her own eternal and glorious magnificence."

"It is possible that it may be so," said his sister, "for most beautiful is the spot, covered as it is with traces of man's perishable greatness—and beautiful also are its surrounding hills—and strange are the emotions stirred within the heart, when gazing at the wide plane spread before it—at once the cradle and the grave of the 'Queen of Nations.'"

"How different," continued the baronet, "will be the fate of the prospect before us, in one or two generations scarcely a vestige of its present appearance will remain, and when, in the course of ages, the tide of civilization has rolled away, to save the other quarter of the globe, what a shapeless mass of ruins will be left cumbering the ground, and without one glorious or ennobling recollection to endear it to posterity. Nature, it is true, will again assert her dominion, the fragile materials will crumble into dust, her green mantle will again be spread over the land, but its face will have been so changed to suit the convenience of the destroyer, that it will retain no trace of its original beauty. No ideas, no emotions, like those roused by Tivoli, will arrest the solitary traveller who may pass over it, and he will hasten through a tract destitute alike of natural charms, and of historical associations."

"Ah, well," said her ladyship, smiling, "never mind John. How deliciously cool and refreshing is the breeze, and what an air of happiness is visi-

bly impressed on every thing around; was it not Cowley who said the—

“Soft-footed winds with tuneful voices,”

how truly descriptive it is, for there is music in every breath. Well, let us homeward. Of all the delights, which God has given his creatures faculties to enjoy, none seem to me so permanent, so pure, and so soothing, as the sights and sounds of animate and inanimate nature, when seen under the influence of early spring—the very air is redolent of sweets, and buds and blossoms are bursting into life, in a hundred different ways, yet all equally beautiful, and all equally displaying the care and wisdom of the Creator. Well sung Shelley that spring is—

“Like the spirit of love felt every where,
And each flower and herb on the earth’s dark breast
Wakes from the dreams of its wintry rest.”

And all and every thing breathes of happiness from—

“The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of living grass,”

to the minutest plant around us, there proceeds—

“The music of many murmurings,”

which speaks in most eloquent language, of the profuse enjoyment showered upon all created beings.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

"There—if, O gentle love, I read aright,
The utterance that sealed thy sacred bond,
"Twas listening to those accents of delight."
Campbell.

In this society, Anne's life passed like a "summer dream." The purity of heart, the refined and cultivated intellects of the party, came like "sweet music" over her spirits, and she seemed placed in an atmosphere peculiarly framed for her own moral constitution.

She was left, at intervals, a great deal in the sole companionship of Sir John Scarsbrook, the earl having left them to transact some business in town, and her ladyship, spending part of every day on her couch—rest and absolute quietude, proving the best restoratives for her nervous debility.

Anne was treated by Sir John with all the delicate attention due to an equal. He read with her—walked with her—rode by her side—and never, by word or deed, called to her mind that she was a defenceless and unprotected woman; his own elevated tone of thinking would have prevented this in any case, and Anne had a shield before her, stronger than "triple brass," made up of her simplicity and loveliness.

It was impossible, however, for two beings like

Sir John Scarsbrook and Anne, without loving each other. The disparity of their rank could not long be a barrier, as—

“Love laughs at pedigrees.”

and though the nameless foundling, ever in her fondest mood, could never think of him as an equal, or as one with whom she could share her fate, this did not prevent her loving him with all the deep devotedness of her young heart, now first awakened to a knowledge of its own sensibilities.

Sir John's feelings towards her were of a blended character, admiration and love forming the principal ingredient. Every hour he spent in her society, served more deeply to drive home the dart of the boy god, and though he strove to hide the emotions her presence excited, the instinct of mutual love soon made them aware of how much value each was to the other.

To Anne, indeed, the baronet had been from the first day of their acquaintance, a kind of divinity —his person, his manners, and his attentions, had enthroned him on the altar of love, which has its seat in every woman's soul. All that she had seen of him to the present time, had only served to enhance the beauty of the idol of her affections, and make her worship with more intensity its attributes. In poverty and in exile from his society, she had found how dear he was to her, and though she trembled and despaired, and would even have shunned him, under ordinary circumstances, the thrill of happiness that ran through her frame, when his mellow voice again fell upon her ears, made her blush and shrink within herself. Day

after day she had yielded to the delightful fascination, and though she strove with all the subtlety of a loving woman to conceal her feelings, there were momentary gushes of tenderness that filled her eyes with tears, and betrayed how intense and profound was the love now dwelling in her breast,

Several weeks passed away in this delightful association—the baronet became abstracted and silent—and Anne, in place of the elastic step and beaming eyes, which at first marked her presence, now moved shyly and timidly about, as if she were ever fearful some eye was upon her, to note and watch her minutest actions.

The health of the countess improved apace, and it had been determined to remove to a seat of the earl's, in one of the southern counties, about the middle of June, and to visit London for a week or two, on their route. The earl on his return noticed Anne's downcast looks and frequent blushes, and on mentioning the subject to her ladyship, he was at once let into the cause, as she had seen with some uneasiness, the development of Anne's affection, and the equally decided partiality of her brother. She had been observing them with anxious kindness, without knowing how to speak or interfere. His lordship was for a time incredulous, but his own observations soon verified his wife's statement. He was deeply pained, and recalled to the mind of the countess his premonitory warning, with some slight asperity. His aristocratic prejudices were fully aroused, and though admiring and esteeming his brother-in-law, the cherishing an unknown being, however amiable and excellent in herself, and the doing this in his own paternal mansion, and in the presence of his sister—for some days this annoyed and even angered him.

There was, by this means a slight family ea-

trangement, and an air of stiffness and restraint pervaded the party extremely irksome to every member of it. Each one seemed to know instinctively the feelings of the other, and all wished to speak on the subject, and yet no one dared to do so.

One morning when Lady Lucy was dressing, assisted by Anne, Sir John entered the room, and having seated himself, remained silent, attentively watching the two beautiful women before him,—the sylph-like figure of Anne, contrasting finely with the more matronly contour of her ladyship. Anne's fingers trembled and her heart palpitated, and “thick coming blushes tinged her cheeks,” till Lady Lucy, feeling for her embarrassment begged she would prepare to accompany her in her usual walk.

“Now John,” said her ladyship, seating herself beside him, and taking his hand in hers, “let us have no further reserves.—You love Anne, and I am not surprised it is so.”

“You speak the truth, my dear Lucy, and it is time that all reserve should be at an end.—The purity and simplicity of Anne's character, let alone her exquisite loveliness, have carried me back to the bright and sunny days of my boyhood; yet I know not how to speak to her or to you on the subject: to look upon such a creature with any but the most pure views, would be a sacrilege, and her condition is such, that I candidly own to you, I know not how I can imagine her becoming my wife.”

“Spoken like yourself, John;—I feel for you, and more especially I feel for Anne;—she behaves herself nobly, and even Haggerton is beginning to do her justice. I will not conceal from you his present opinions; you know him too well, and love

me too much to let these influence your regard for him; and I allude to them in order to point out to you, that if the prejudice of rank and birth are so powerful upon Haggerton, as even to make him unjust if not ungenerous, in what light would your connection with Anne be viewed by your peculiar circle? Haggerton's long tried friendship has found it impossible to reconcile him to the idea; and I own to you, that even I, loving you as I do, and loving Anne as a sister, could not sanction your marriage with her. And at any thing but this I am sure you would not aim."

"God forbid!" said Sir John, "I know well what would be the world's opinion of my union with an unknown woman; and I am not, though in love, fool enough to despise and neglect it. But she must be noble, Lucy, come from what stock she may,—howsoever criminal may have been her parents, and whatever dark and repulsive features are connected with her history, these cannot lessen her merits, nor pluck the diadem of stainless truth and honour from her unsmirched brow."

"I grant, my dear brother, that she is in every way worthy as a woman, to be even your wife. But society demands certain conventional and arbitrary qualifications in these cases, and its authority is despotic. That you might be happy in retirement with a companion like Anne, is more than probable; but this seclusion from the world both your rank and your talents ought to prohibit."

"Believe me, Lucy, I will never marry any woman, whom I shall hesitate to proclaim as my wife, nor one for whose sake I should think it requisite to compromise my own reputation, or the prospects of my children. Would to God, the mystery which envelopes this lovely girl could be dissipated!"

"In that wish I cordially join you—but there is no clue, no trace—and she is drooping and withering under the influence of her passion. It were better you parted; I should grieve to lose her, but I should grieve more to lose you both."

"You are right, my love," answered Sir John, sighing, as he left the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DECLARATION.

"She hid those eyes upon his breast—beyond
Expression's power to paint—all languishingly fond."
Campbell.

In the midst of these sweet and bitter fancies, and whilst the slight desagremens just mentioned, were slowly subsiding, the baronet received the following pithy epistle, from the worthy Knight John Manford. Jem, the factotum, appeared to have been dismissed from his office of footman, the bearer of the present missive, being a footman of a very different style,—he rode a blood horse, sported top-boots and a smart cockade, and on delivering his credentials, gave his hat a flourish, as much as to say—"I'm 'th' mon at Mr. Grundy's," which being done he gave his able horse the head, and vanished like a meteor.

The letter ran as follows:—

"Sir,

"Understanding that my apprentice Anne, is at this present time living wi' you as your concubine, this is to tell you, that if so be you don't send her back to work out her wages, or pay me the charges I've had wi' her, I shall proceed against you as the law directs.

"Your humble Servant,
"JOHN MANFORD, *Knt.*"

To this gracious communication was appended an immensely long catalogue of all necessaries and unnecessaries, which had been purchased on Anne's account, forming a sum total of no slight magnitude.

Sir John read over this specimen of the "polite letter writer," without exactly comprehending its signification, though it appears to be plain enough even to the meanest capacity; he was, however, filled with disgust at the base and malicious conduct of Manford, in thus harassing and persecuting a friendless and desolate creature. "But," he exclaimed in his enthusiasm, "she has a protector! her virtues have secured her at least one friend, and that one friend would be her buckler 'gainst a million."

In this mood of mind, and without reflecting upon what he was doing, he sought Anne, and found her in the library, engaged in transcribing some passages for Lady Lucy, from one of the older English poets.

"I have," said Sir John, seating himself beside her, "just received a most extraordinary document from your once kind protector, Anne."

"What is it about, sir, I tremble to think of what I have suffered through his unkindness, but I cannot forget that he once was most kind to me."

"Why, he very peremptorily commands me to return you to him, else threatening I know not what."

Anne's countenance lighted up with terror, and raising her fine eyes, she exclaimed—

"Save me, sir, save me!"

"Fear nothing, Anne," he answered, his arm for the first time encircling her, "not for worlds would I suffer you to be harmed or injured by any human being. You are here sacred from all harm, and

nothing shall remove you, till you yourself wish to depart from us."

"Never, never," murmured the agitated Anne, in a voice hardly audible, yet most eloquent, "never, never!"

"Never, never, Anne!" he almost whispered, drawing her still closer to him,—"never, never! Alas! there's no such unchangeableness in human nature."

She looked in his eyes one second, and then buried her face on his breast, and sobbed out "Never, never!"

No further words were spoken—but their vows were plighted—and Anne dared to return the passionate embrace, which betrayed the intensity of Scarsbrook's feeling.

It has been often said, that

————— "Man's love
Is of man's life, a thing apart."

This is an error—man loves as deeply, as tenderly, and as devotedly, as women—when the world's cares and the world's blighting influences have not been an overmatch for his sensibilities. Scarsbrook, a man naturally of refined and susceptible mind, was as much a subject of the impulses of love as the blushing and beautiful woman now enfolded in his arms, and his emotions were as undying as those which were filling her panting heart.

This event made Sir John anxious to remove her from a neighbourhood where she would ever be exposed to annoyances, and he eagerly urged on their preparations for quitting Vale Hall. Lady Lucy hinted guardedly and delicately at Anne's accompanying them; but he paid no attention to her, and in a few days they were set down at their town house in Park Lane.

Fashion was at its zenith—for, by one of those extraordinary anomalies which are prevalent in the kingdom of that goddess, the very time when nature is most lavish of her beauties, when a country residence is most delightful, she condemns her votaries to a town life. The house of the Earl of Haggerton became at once the centre of a brilliant circle, and Anne Talbot was here initiated into all the mysteries of high life in its best form. She was greatly admired, and innumerable were the inquiries made concerning her. If *any* thing had been wanting to reconcile Sir John Scarsbrook to his choice, this spontaneous and universal admiration would have done much; for, like all proud men, he delighted to see a favourite object of his own made the hobby of the many.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE—INQUIRIES.

"All manners take a tincture from our own."

Amongst the earliest of their visitors was the Marquis of Swansbeck. Sir John Scarsbrook and he had been, notwithstanding the difference of their ages (as the Marquis was upwards of forty) very close friends. He came accompanied by his young and beautiful wife—one of those Venus-like figures, sometimes nursed by southern Italy, from whence, indeed, he had brought her, after a prolonged absence from England.

The Marquis was one of those characters sometimes met with in society whom nobody likes, although having about them every requisite for being beloved. He was a fine and classical figure, and richly endowed with moral and intellectual excellences; but he had in his manner a distant and stately reserve, a kind of concealed haughtiness, that kept his fellows at bay, and seemed to place a gulf between them. Nobody could exactly say why they did not like him, and yet most people did not like him—Martial's epigram on Sabidis was the only reason which could be given for it—

"Non amo te Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare.
Hoc tantum possum dicere—non amo te."

Scarsbrook and the Marquis had, however, some points in common, and having been thrown a good

deal together during a continental tour, they had become fast friends. Whatever the opinion of the world might be as to the unamiable disposition of this nobleman, it was clear that he had private virtues of no common order, from the deep and passionate attachment of his young wife. She seemed to hang upon him with an entire dependence, which even the conventional modes of the circle in which they were placed had been unable to overcome. Her history was almost as little known as that of Anne ; she had come into the midst of the throng and excitement of fashionable life several seasons before, like a " spirit of light," as the Marchioness of Swansbeck. Rumour, of course, was busily at work, but nothing had been elicited as to her birth, parentage, and education, beyond the mere assertion, that she was the daughter of a noble house in Italy.

The personal history of the Marquis, it was whispered, was romantic, and tinged with remarkable colours. This, however, seemed to be rather a vague surmise than any thing else. Certain it is, that many years ago, after moving as a star of the first magnitude in the fashionable hemisphere of London, he had been shunned by his family, and had left England abruptly—why, or wherefore, had never been explained.

The three ladies were much charmed with each other. Phidias might have modelled a group of Juno, Venus, and Io from them ; and as they were much together, they went in their coterie under the name of—the lovely triad. Balls, fêtes champêtres, and soirees, were the order of the day, and the fortnight the party had intended to make the limit of their stay, had been already exceeded. Lady Haggerton was pleased that the incessant round of amusement kept her brother and Anne apart; and she hoped, that in the rush and hurry

of public life he might, to some extent, have his regard lessened, nursed as it had been in solitude, and heightened, she believed, by his abstraction from society. In the crowd of lovely women who were daily before him, comprising all that was noble and fascinating in the sex, she indulged in the expectation, that his love for the foundling might be superceded by some more fitting bride. In this wish her ladyship was actuated by the best motives towards Anne and her brother, nor did it prevent her treating her with the kindness of a sister.

It was impossible, however, to conceal from Sir John and from Anne these feelings, though they were most scrupulously guarded. Shakspeare said very quaintly, but very truly, that—

“Love’s feelings are more soft and sensible
Than are the horns of cockled snails;”

And she had now and then the mortification of seeing a slight cloud upon their countenances, as she urged a prolonged stay in town. She forgot Corneille’s truism, that—

“Un véritable amant ne connaît point d’amis,”

and she saw herself in a fair way for precipitating an event, which she felt would be hazardous to the happiness of two beings, both dear to her.

Sir John had paid more than one visit to the Foundling Hospital, in the hope that he might find some clue to unravel the mystery of Anne’s origin. Her memory, however, was not sufficiently exact as to dates, to enable him to find any entry in the books of the institution which appeared to relate to her. There was a brief notice of a certain number of children having been sent to John Manford; but

they were not named, so that he was left to wade and ponder through a long list; without the slightest clue, except the name, to guide him. As far as he could learn from the officials, children were frequently brought there, having about them, either some remarkable article of dress, or some particular mark, which were regularly registered; that as to names, they were bestowed arbitrarily, and according to the fancies of the nurses. He had, however, no means of ascertaining Anne's exact age, and amongst the many Annes he knew not which to select. She seemed to have some faint recollection of having carried something from the hospital, perhaps a particular registry of her entrance, or some article belonging to herself; but the change of scene, and the stirring incidents immediately following her arrival at Manfords, had so confused and checked her remembrances, that she found it impossible to recall any thing distinctly. This rendered an application to Manford needful, and from this the baronet shrunk; neither did he think it likely that *any* information could be procured from him, even were he disposed to give it.

In this dilemma the baronet remained, till the time arrived when they had determined to quit London for Alton House. The Marquis and Marchioness of Swansbeck accompanied them, and the beginning of July found them in the castellated mansion of Haggerton's forefathers,—one of those noble relics of old English architecture, that lend so great a charm to a country, filled with historical memories.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DETERMINATION.

"The idea of her love did sweetly creep,
Into his study of imagination."
Much ado about Nothing.

In the romantic and sequestered scenery surrounding Alton House, Anne and Sir John Scarsbrook drank still more deeply at the fountain of love. Nature, charming as she ever is, has a powerful influence upon the affections, and in their long and solitary walks, it seemed as if love had shed—

"A baptism on the flowers."

Anne abandoned herself to the intoxication of her passion, and her devotion was repaid by the baronet, by the most ardent and delicate attention.

Spite of the gently-murmured remonstrances of his sister, he determined on uniting himself with the foundling. His imaginative and enthusiastic temperament, had been taken captive, and Anacreon said truly that—

"All defence to folly turns,
When, within, the battle burns."

The earl was still more decided in his objections,

and more than one kind, but antipersuasive conversation passed between them, ending as a matter of course in both parties retaining their opinions, and at length it was finally announced that their nuptials would be solemnized in the middle of August.

The marchioness congratulated Anne very warmly,—she knew nothing of her peculiar situation, and asked very innocently, if her mother and sisters would be present at the ceremony—Anne blushed and faltered out, that she had no mother or sisters.

“Ah! then I pity you my sweet girl,” replied the marchioness, “we are so far alike in our fates,—I have no mother, no sister, no brother, no father in the world—none—none but my husband. And you will be like me, Scarsbrook will become to you, what the Marquis is to me—your all, your every thing—with no feeling to break the current of your affections—with none to claim your regards—Oh, what a life of felicity will be yours. You know not, my love,” you cannot imagine,” she continued, throwing her arms round Anne’s neck, “you cannot imagine half the felicity of married life,—I would not exchange one hour spent with the marquis, for an age of other existence.”

Anne felt that she spoke the truth, and burying her blushing face in her bosom, breathed gently her wish that she might be as happy as her friend.

“You will my dear, you must,—Scarsbrook is all nobleness, all tenderness—you have nothing to fear, nothing,”—and she repeated in her low, silvery and voluptuous voice, a part of Goethe’s “Welcome and Farewell,” saying—

“Yes, my love, it is thus you may address Scarsbrook, as I have hundreds of times addressed the marquis—

"I saw thee—gentle joy did glide,
 From thy bewitching gaze on me,
 My heart it throb'd at thy fond side,
 And heav'd its every sigh for thee !
 A zephyr, with its rosy tress,
 Fly'd round thy face in that sweet spot ;
 And oh ! for me thy tenderness—
 I hoped it—I deserved it not !

"Yet ah ! when morn has chas'd the night,
 My heart is wrung by farewell thro' ;
 But in thy kiss—oh, what delight,
 Though in thine eyes, such gentle woe !
 Thou goes't—I stand—thy heart is moved
 On me is fixed thy dewy sight ;
 Yet what delight to be beloved—
 To love—oh, heav'n!—what mad delight !"

Anne returned her embrace, for the two passionate beings, though nurtured in different climes, and under very diverse circumstances, were both Juliets in heart and soul.

Sir John, having thus passed the Rubicon, felt more at ease ; and conscious of the importance of placing his future wife well with society, he resolved to visit Vale Hall, and, overcoming his scruples to wait upon Manford, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not Anne's faint remembrances had any substantial foundation.

Lady Haggerton sighed at this termination of her protection of Anne, though loving and admiring her, she would have wished it different. To show her feelings, to be harsh, or for a moment to endeavour to cloud her happiness, was foreign to her gentle nature, and she treated her as became the betrothed bride of her brother.—She trembled, however, to be asked who Anne was, for hitherto she had passed for some young friend of her own, and what few inquiries had been made,

had been readily parried. Pride of birth, a pleasure in looking back on a long line of illustrious ancestors, a nervous anxiety for her brother's pride of self, made her if not overlook the foundling's excellencies, think her at least better as her friend, than as her sister.

CHAPTER XXX.

VISIT TO THE PLEBEIANS.

"Look you, sir ! here's manners."
Old Play.

The baronet was received by his establishment at Vale Hall with great joy, for he cultivated the regard and esteem of his inferiors ; and in this way held out a specimen to the majority of people of rank and wealth, who seem to consider their domestics as things too vile for even kindly regard, and to view them as an inferior race of beings, born solely to minister to their wants and caprices.

The game-keeper, whose life he had been the means of saving, and whom he had advanced to an office of trust in his household, informed him, that Sir John Manford had sent several times for Anne, and that his messengers had been very uncivil and abusive. The depressed labourers had, he rejoiced to find, discovered the error of their ways, and, in place of rebelling against a system of labour, which they could not overcome, had set themselves to work, to strive, by industry, to save their families from want; so that Orator Sampson, and his accompanying scoundrels, had decamped to some more unsettled quarter.

On the following morning, he rode over to the manufactory, attended by his groom. The mill had been rebuilt on a much larger scale, and in a much more ornamental style; and Factory Hall looked down upon it with becoming dignity. This,

too, had been rebuilt, and was, as Mrs. Manford expressed herself, “ten times grander” than the old house.—The baronet, on riding up to the hall door, was somewhat surprised to find a dashing britscha, and a groom with an enormous pair of whiskers, which would have qualified their grower, for a living show-board of Rowland’s Ma-cassar.

He was shown into a magnificent drawing-room, hung round with family portraits; and in a few minutes, Mrs. Manford, senior, Mrs. Manford, junior, and one of the Miss Manfords made their appearance,—stately and grand, and very primly inquired Sir John’s pleasure.

“I come, Mrs. Manford,” said Sir John, “to inquire, from Sir John Manford, whether or not, when Anne was sent down from London to him, any document or any article belonging to her accompanied her. Anne is, as you are doubtless aware, residing with Lady Haggerton; and we are very anxious to trace out, if possible, her lineage.”

“I dare say,” was Mrs. Manford’s reply, “I dare say as how you be, Sir John—but we knows nothing about it, except that, when she came, she hadn’t a shoe to her foot, nor a frock to her back; and I think it would be betterer, and more fitter, Sir John, that you should pay our Sir John for boarding and lodging of her, than be asking for any thing. She was nothing but a little starved dirty girl, and he made a lady of her—more fool he!—but, howsomever, if you don’t pay, he’ll take the law on you.”

It required all Scarsbrook’s philosophy to keep down his disgust and anger, at hearing this most elegant and lady-like speech. He felt, however, that there was too much at stake, and answered her calmly—

"To avoid all misconstruction, I must inform you, Mrs. Manford, that it is my intention to make Anne my wife; the cause of my inquiries you may, therefore, easily divine."

The ladies stared at each other for a second or two, and then, apparently forgetting the baronet's presence, burst into a violent fit of laughing.

"Well Nancy!" exclaimed Mrs. Manford, senior, "I told thee it would end in something; but I did na think it would end in that. What a pert hussy—to be sure!"

"Never heed, mother, she's only a bit of a foundling; and, you know, our Nelly's going to be married to a *Count*.

"That's a comfort, to be sure. But, howsoever, you see, Sir John—may be, we're almost as great folks as you; and if so be as you don't pay our John, why, I tell you again, he'll take the law on you. And to tell you a bit more of my mind, I thinks as how Jem the keeper, would be a much proper husband for Anne, than you;—that's my mind, Sir John—and as I was a mother to her, why I thinks as how I ought to know."

"Well, Mrs. Manford, I will not pain myself or you, by expressing my feelings on this occasion, but will confine myself to begging simply, that if any document or article came with Anne, I shall hold myself obliged by Sir John Manford transmitting it to me, or to my agent at Vale Hall; and for this he shall be amply rewarded—and twice the amount he claims for her guardianship shall be paid over to him."

"That's speaking purpose-like, Sir John,—and I'll tell him—and as you are going to marry out of our family, in a way, I'll tell you a bit of news. You must know that our Nelly's going to marry Count Hartmann!—Now isn't that something?—You see she'll beat Anne hollow," relaxing into

a smile, as she began gossipping, "wont she Sir John?"

Sir John very politely bowed, and wished the ladies good morning. As he passed through the hall, he heard a loud and obstreperous laugh, and his nose was regaled by the perfume of a meerschaum, both of which delectabilities he rightly conjectured to proceed from Count Hartmann, to whom also the britscha and the whiskered charioteer were appendages.

He was much mortified by his visit to the rich plebeians, though its result would have been easily foretold by any one but a man in love. Sir John had wooed himself into the belief, that Anne's connection with himself would, to a very great extent, elevate her to his own status, and, as a matter of course, free her from all rude and personal allusions. Mrs. Manford had done something towards breaking the illusion, and though she had been scarcely more civil to himself than to his betrothed wife, his entire vexation was on her account. As he rode back to Vale Hall he felt gloomy and disconcerted; Anne's sun-like smile of welcome was wanting; and as he shut himself up in the library, he *almost* persuaded himself into the belief, that he was about to do a very foolish thing, in marrying a foundling.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE COUNT.

"Like a strutting player, whose conceit
Lies in his whiskers."

Troilus and Cressida.

The presence of Count Hartmann, at Factory Hall, indicated in the last chapter, and which had had a considerable influence upon Sir John Scarsbrook's reception there, had added no little dignity to the manufacturers. A ferocious looking man, mustachched profusely, a groom, bewiskered in equal amplitude, and a britcscha, were no ordinary sights; and, therefore, they produced a sensation.

The count was one of those anomalies, who spring from nobody knows where, and who manage to thrust themselves into society by downright impudence and unblushing sangfroid. It is true, that these worthies generally represent themselves as coming from some obscure German state, in which they have a castle and some dependants, and their representations may be true. Be that as it may, however, certain it is, that the "usages de société" are unable to keep out these occasional interlopers, who figure away for awhile, and then

make their final exit, on the discovery of some notable piece of diablerie.

Count Hartmann had been known to one or two of the officers, commanding the troops still stationed in the vicinity of the manufactoryes. Being on a provincial tour, as is customary with eminent foreigners, he had accidentally fallen in with one of these gentlemen, who had invited him to dinner with the mess. To this invite the count readily agreed, and during the repast, and over the subsequent bottle, he had heard a very animated narrative of the plebeian's ball, which was considered as a standing topic of amusement. This had led to a good deal of intercourse between the military and the natives, and the gentlemen whose sole business was to *kill* time, had found an inexhaustible resource in calling, ad libitum, upon the different families, by whom they were honourably received; and if eating and drinking could make men happy, they were now in elysium, at least as far as plenty went.

The count had listened to these details with great attention, and as a good deal of jesting passed regarding the wiving amongst the wealthy vulgarians, he swore roundly that he wanted a wife, or at all events that he wanted money, and that he would set them an example. The laugh went round—and it was ultimately agreed that De l'Epeé, who was chief favourite, should on the morrow give him an introduction seriatum to the leading families; and that, having made his selection, he was to be allowed to push his matrimonial advances, without let or hindrance from his military friends.

The following day, Sir A. de L'Epeé and the count, set out on their tour of inspection; on many of the ladies, the only remark which could be ex-

tracted from the foreigner was "*Bête, bête, bête!*" Matters, however, promised better at Manford's, as the daughter of Thomas Manford, one of Sir John's brother's was there—Miss Helen Manford, the Nelly of whom Mrs. Manford had spoken to Sir John Scarsbrook. Helen moving in a vulgar atmosphere, and having imbibed it from childhood, was vulgar, but her vulgarity was of a different stamp from that of her parents and their contemporaries, for Helen had been at boarding-school, and had learned music and manners, two things utterly unknown to her respectable progenitors—however, Helen Manford was now between seventeen and eighteen years of age, an age when a woman, if not absolutely repulsive, must be worthy some attention; and here the count fixed his choice, and opened his campaign by an odd kind of civility, which he believed was sure to make an immediate impression upon the heart of the young lady.

His grimaces and mustachios, for a time, completely overcame the blushing Helen. His English, too, was by no means of the most orthodox purity; and as he ran on in a mingled patois of language, Mrs. Manford, the mother, thought him "of the extraordinest and curiosist men," she had either ever seen, or ever heard tell of.

After a somewhat prolonged interview, the count rose to depart, protesting, in the most decided manner, that—

"He put his love at her feet, and that he should never more look melancholy as long as he did live, but that he would take the liberty her 'beaux yeux' did give, to pay his duty to her on the following day. Yes," he ended, "I will have the one great happiness to kiss your hand, on the day of to-morrow; I shall be 'tout à fait mecontent' until that time; and I now wish you one farewell."

His parting from the rest of the family was equally ceremonious; and after his departure, the following very natural conversation took place, regarding the person and qualification of Helen's admirer.

"Well, Helen," began her mother, "what does thee think of yonder foreigner? I'm sure he's in love with thee."

"Lord, mother!" answered the young lady, "what nonsense. It's only the man's foreign ways. I wonder I didn't laugh; but I was frightened at his mustachios."

"I never," said another of the party, "saw such a thing in my life. Why, he's quite a fright. He shouldn't touch me with a pair of tongs."

"No, nor me neither," echoed another, "I'd as soon kiss a bear. I'm sure I should faint if he came near me."

"Nonsense, lasses," said Mrs. Mansford, senior, "it's all nonsense; I dare say the count's a decentish man; only you see as how these foreigners are fond of having their faces covered with hair. I shouldn't wonder as how he lets it grow to keep him warm in this cold country. But if I were thee Nelly," addressing herself to the young lady, "I'd either make him keep it well curled, or shave it, for it looked mighty bristly."

"Bristly," said another, laughing, "why his face is for all the world like a pair of scrubbing brushes. I'll take good care he never scrubs my cheeks though. It must be quite shocking."

"Well," answered the mother, "it must be very queer at first; but I dare say Helen will soon get used to it."

"Yes," laughed another, "she'd better practise kissing the carpet brush."

Meantime, Miss Helen was laughed quite out of countenance, and, as is customary with young ladies on such occasions, went into a great pet, and declared that the "foreign man," was her abhorrence, and that she didn't like him one bit better than her companions.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A THRIVING WOOER.

"She is a woman—therefore to be won."

Henry Fifth.

Notwithstanding Helen Manford's vehement declarations, the following and many subsequent days, saw Count Hartmann assiduously at her side; and so far had use reconciled the young ladies at large to his hairy face, that they actually began to look with some contempt on the beardless smooth chins, who had, till his arrival, been esteemed very tolerable specimens of Manhood, in expectancy.

The count was also a great favourite with the seniors, male and female, he told wonderful stories of battles and sieges, in all of which he took a most prominent part; and he could drink and smoke and sing a comic song, and altogether suited himself so well to the particular tastes of his entertainers, that he was soon quite naturalized amongst them.

Helen, as being the object of his particular attentions, was, at length, proud of her conquest, and listened, with great complacency, to his never-ending rhodomontades, little of which she understood, but all of which served to make him, in her simple understanding, something of a hero. Admiration and wonder being thus engaged on his side—love came on apace, and before long, she might

have said, as Mortimer said to the daughter of Glendower—

“I understand thy kisses, and thou mine—
And that’s a feeling disputation.”

The count indeed pushed on matters with great celerity, having ascertained from Thomas Manford, that he should give his daughter ten thousand pounds on her marriage day, and that besides this, there was the residue of his fortune, and huge expectations from his elder brother, and from another who was childless; this certified information—raised a flame of adoration in the count’s breast—and he allowed Helen to have no peace, either morning, noon, or night.

“Oh, mine good father-in-law,” he was in the habit of saying, as they sat over their cups,—“Oh, mine good father-in-law, I shall be one most joyous man, with your daughter and with your money.”

This latter part of his speech was undoubtedly perfectly sincere. The count had had sufficient experience of the “res angusta domi,” to make him worship wealth, and it seemed to him, that he had reached El Dorado, when he fell in with the manufacturers. He indulged in the most extravagant anticipations, and on the strength of coming events, ordered a magnificent outfit with which he dazzled the eyes of the beholders.

At this juncture too, arrived a second count, who delighted in the euphonious appellation of Count Jules Jamblichus, he was the very prototype of his “very dear friend,” Count Hartmann, and it was upon the receipt of the following letter, from that worthy whiskerandos, that he had winged his way, vulture-like, to Factory Hall:

"My very good Julès,

"I pray you to call yourself Count Julès Jamblichus, and by the help of the inclosed £50, put yourself into proper appearances for being a fit man for a husband. I am about to get £100,000, and all for marrying one little girl, and you shall do the very same thing if you will come to me, and follow my directions. You may perhaps very well remember that we did once seek for the gold among the rocks and stones of the mountains, but here, there is one great mine of gold, and it only wants one little girl to be made one wife, to have as much as one would like. It is but very little labour to get money here, and you, my good Julès, shall be very rich man, if you will do as I will tell you.

"HARTMANN."

This letter very speedily brought Count Julès Jamblichus to Factory Hall, where the two wily confederates took up their head quarters; but Count Julès Jamblichus, though full as outrè in his actions and manners as his comrade, was destitute of decency and discretion, and behaved himself so scandalously, that even the short-sighted, obtuse and prejudiced manufacturers, were rather shocked with his sayings and doings, which betrayed a much more intimate acquaintance with the essence of ultra-blagardism than with any moral or social refinement.

Count Hartmann laboured zealously to keep his friend within bounds; but drink, drink, drink, kept him ever in an unsafe condition for both their schemes, till, his patience being worn out, and his arrangements being in imminent danger of utter ruin, Count Julès Jamblichus, after an inebriated farewell, was safely conveyed away, under the

guardianship of his friend's groom, but whence he came, or whither he went, nothing was known.

To put things to rights again, Count Hartmann was loud in condemning his countryman, whom he swore was a lost man, in consequence of indulging in the strong drinks of the country, for that formerly he was a man of singular piety and discretion, and to crown all, he presented Helen with a splendid set of jewells, with a note, purporting to come from his sister, to the intended bride of her brother.

This incident determined the count to put an immediate close to his matrimonial campaign; he did not find much repugnance on the part of the lady or the lady's friends, as in fact it was a proud day at Factory Hall and the surrounding residences, when it was formally announced that Miss Helen Manford would, in the course of the following fortnight, be married to Count Hartmann.

It was at this peculiar time that Sir John Scarsbrook called upon the Mansfords, and by an odd coincidence, his own marriage with the foundling was fixed for the same week as the Count's marriage with Helen. Manford took not the slightest notice of his urgent and repeated requests, beyond a somewhat blunt note, disclaiming all knowledge of any thing connected with Anne beyond his account against her, and Sir John, seeing the hopelessness of his polite inquiries, and sickened at the humorous coarseness with which his intended bride was treated, hastened away, to forget in her actual charms, the occasional painful twinges of pride which harassed him.

"A husband," he communed with himself, "may give a wife rank, and Anne's excellencies must win for her personal regards; the world has indeed absurd notions upon birth, and in the circles

of exclusion, she may meet with difficulties ;—but she is pure and spotless, and for her unknown origin she is at least not to blame, and even if she should shrink from the coldness of society, we are not chained within its sphere.”

Sir John was in love, therefore his soliloquy goes for nothing; became poetical in his fancies, and thought that Anne was “a jewel beyond price,” and consequently—

“what unto him is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide—
Its living things—its air—its sky—
Are nothing to his mind and eye.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MARRIED LOVE.

———“heedless as the dead are they,
Of aught around, above, beneath,
As if all else had passed away,
They only for each other breath.”

Parisina.

The rapturous fondness with which Anne received the baronet, made ample amends for the vexations and chagrins he had undergone. The marchioness had remained at Alton House, at her urgent entreaties, and had further agreed to grace her nuptials with her presence.

The fortnight yet wanting to the appointed day flew rapidly, amidst preparations at home and abroad. A seat of Scarsbrook's in Hampshire was prepared for the bridal party; and fond, but embarrassed expectation kept all Anne's sensibilities in full play. The company of the marchioness was of infinite service to her. The similarity of their moral temperaments made them fully understand and appreciate each other; and Anne could pour out into her bosom all her passionate feelings, with a consciousness that there was an answering chord of enthusiasm in the heart of her friend.

This companionship was of the more value, because the confidence she required she could not place freely and unhesitatingly in Lady Haggerton; sensible as she was, that her ladyship was still far from approving her brother's choice. Love, though blind enough in some matters, is quick

sighted in others, and in none more so than in impediments placed in its path. Above all things too—

“Love delights in praise,”

and this could not be indulged in to its full extent to her ladyship.

A magnificent troucseau was provided by the earl for his future sister-in-law, and on the appointed day, Anne was united to Sir John Scarsbrook, bringing as her dower—simplicity, beauty, innocence, and virtue, and the “million delights” which dwell in the love of woman.

She flung herself into his arms on the completion of the ceremony, and as a husband’s kiss was pressed upon her lips, and a lover’s blessing breathed in her ear, a gush of passionate tears betrayed how blissful were her emotions—when, now, she dared to call him her’s, and to lavish upon him the whole sum of her earthly affections.

After a “dejeune à la fourchette,” the “happy pair,” to use the customary phraseology, left Alton House, and put themselves “en route” for Highcliff; where they arrived after a drive of eight or ten hours,—a drive too exciting to allow them to be perfectly happy.

What a world of bliss, and of pure enjoyment, does marriage offer to man. It may be, and ought to be a very fairy land, full of luxurious enchantments; for it has within it all the elements for being so—as here—

“Love his golden shafts employs—here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings—
Here reigns and revels.”

The mingling of two souls, moderately endowed with sensibility, opens a mine of delights, unbound-

ed and inexhaustible in its treasures. The calm happiness—the tranquil joys—

“Those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow,”

from married love, rivet themselves upon the heart, with a firmness totally distinct from all other impressions—

“The sweet intercourse
Of sweet looks and smiles,”

have an attraction, and an enduring charm, far more powerful than all the blandishments of the most artful of the sex.

How exquisitely delicious is the intercourse between man and wife, when mutual love and properly-tempered wishes animate them. How gratefully the softened heart yields itself up to a crowd of the holiest emotions—how it blesses the being who has—

“Gay smiles to comfort—April showers to move.”

The very opposition of their tempers is only a source of fresh bursts of tenderness:—though

“Worldly desires, and household cares
Disturb the God-head’s soft affairs.”

these are but as the summer breeze, rippling the surface of a beautiful lake at sunset, which brings flashing into existence a thousand soft and heaven-coloured tints.

Thrice happy is that home where the tutelary genius of marriage presides over its concerns! Thrice happy the man who adores, as his *Dii Lares penates*, the domestic virtues! The contentment, the quiet bliss, ever dwelling there,

are spicy odours, wafted from the very shores of Heaven.

This, at least, was the experience of Sir John Scarsbrook, and his lovely wife. A month passed away—a month of unmixed happiness—and it was with no slight reluctance that they tore themselves from a residence which had been hallowed and endeared by delights such as are experienced by those only, whose sensibilities are undeadened by worldly cares, and uncorrupted by worldly selfishness.

Scarsbrook had, in his own fond imaginings, found in Anne the “beau ideal” of woman. Her gentle waywardness, her simplicity, her moral purity, rendered her, indeed, a creature fitted for his passionate affection; and since their marriage, life had been a scene—

“All love, all sweets, all rareness, all delight.

She had poured upon him the whole torrent of her awakened sensibilities—she had—

“As a jewel, hung existence’s self
Upon the neck of new born love,”

and the utter devotedness of her attachment,—the entire oblivion of self, which she displayed, gave to her a charm in his eyes which made her—

—————“bright
With something of an angel light.”

But society demanded their presence, and they joined a large party assembled at the earl of Haggerton’s during the fashionable interregnum in London, intending, after spending a short time with them, to proceed to Vale Hall, and pass the winter there.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE COUNTESS—LONDON.

“I cannot praise thy marriage choice.”
Sampson Agonistes.

Meantime Helen Manford became Countess Hartmann; Sir John Manford, the bride's uncle, behaved with great liberality, bestowing a marriage gift of five thousand pounds upon her. A series of brilliant fêtes and balls and excursions marked the auspicious event, and Helen thought herself happy.

Before any very lengthy period had elapsed, however, Helen discovered, that to be a countess and a wife, and to be happy were by no means synonymous. If bows, civilities, shawlings, cloakings, grimaces, and being called, “mine very dear wife,” could have made her happy,—Helen would have indeed been a happy woman; but Hartmann was essentially a selfish and hard-minded man, and though treating his wife with abundant outward kindness, woman soon yearns for something deeper than this; home, with its proper affections is her heaven, and if these are not granted to her, there is an aching vacuity in her mind, that renders her uneasy and unhappy. The count knew nothing of home, beyond sitting listlessly smoking his eternal meerschaum, and drinking brandy and water. The little delectabilities which chain woman's heart, he either did not understand, or understanding them, he did not think it worth his while to employ them, and Helen, therefore, sat carelessly

beside him, and after a time, wondered what particular charms dwelt in her husband's society, or in his whiskers.

"Why, mine dear wife!" he would say, during their conjugal tête-à-têtes, "why, mine dear wife, what alls you, that you are quite one silent woman? will you have some of this fine brandy and water, I am very happy, and this tobacco of the Virginie is excellent good."

Now the countess was a woman, and the frigid and heartless tone of her husband grated harshly upon her. If wanting in some of the finer and more delicate shades of character which marked Anne, she was, nevertheless, a woman of feeling, and she grew tired of listening to "mine dear wife," and the smell of tobacco.

"I wonder you don't talk to me," she would say, "or read to me, or do something to amuse me, instead of sitting so idle—I am quite tired with looking at you, and will go and see my mother and cousins."

"Very well, mine dear wife, your mother and your cousins are very good people, and I will come in the night for you."

And so Helen went to her mother's, and Count Hartmann remained at home to indulge in his elysium, utter idleness, unrelieved by any stimulus save brandy.

The tedium of the countess' life, however, was to some extent relieved by the frequent visits of their military neighbours, who still remained in the district. The thoughtlessness of young men with red coats, and epaulettes on their shoulders, in country quarters, who are condemned to be mischievous, simply because they have nothing else to do, led them to make their friend the count, a sort of stalking horse for all their frolics; he was utterly unconscious of ridicule, like other vain and

shallow-headed men, and laughed and grimaced at his own exhibitions of absurdity quite as heartily as the by standers. The countess, however, whose mind was by no means so obtuse, felt his self-inflicted indignities keenly, and though accustomed from childhood to practical joking, when this species of joking was openly and systematically practised upon one, whom she certainly loved, and one to whom naturally she felt some respect to be due, she was greatly annoyed. This was a subject of painful reflection with her, nothing so deeply wounding a woman's pride, as one who ought to be a protector, and from whom she ought to receive reflected support and respect, being treated with contumely or indifference.

The count's present sphere, however, was far too limited for his ambition,—though morally and socially a fool, and though besotted upon his inane indulgences, he had been a gambler and a man of shifts and expedients, and he longed to exhibit himself in all his new blown dignity, on a more conspicuous theatre than Factory Hall and its neighbourhood.

Early in the ensuing spring, therefore, he had determined to locate himself in town, in which design he was encouraged by all the female Manfords, who had formed the charitable resolution of accompanying the countess, and of seeing London. There was a proverb common during the middle ages, “who can resist Novogorod the ‘Great,’” which proverb is applicable to vulgar ideas at the present day, with regard to London; and since Sir John Manford's visit to the metropolis, the accounts given by Mrs. Manford, had excited the most unbounded curiosity throughout all her acquaintance.

The count made no objections to this scheme. His own coarse ideas prevented him seeing his plebeian connections in their true light, as to man-

ner. They were wealthy he knew, and he believed, the "Golden Key" to be the "open sesame" to society. He had never heard of the answer of the Delphic Oracle to Philip of Macedon—*Αργυρεασις λογχαισι μαχου, και παντα κρατησις—*

"Make gold thy weapon, and thou'l conquer all,"

but he was nevertheless fully aware of the truth conveyed by it.

A ready furnished house was engaged in Baker Street, and an establishment prepared under the auspices of some one of his trusted confrères, and in the beginning of April he formally apprised his wife, that their town house was waiting for them. Preparations were soon made, as the ladies had been diligently at work throughout the entire winter. The party consisted of the countess and count, Mrs. Manford la mere, Mrs. John Manford, three Misses Manfords, including Miss Phœbe, and three junior female Manfords—old Mrs. Manford, after much persuasion, agreed to remain at home to take care of Sir John, whom business prevented leaving the mills at present. With this formidable "corps" of ladies, therefore, the count removed to London.

Their great anxiety was, of course, to see "the sights," and a fitter chaperon than Count Hartmann could not have been found. His valet too proved an excellent fellow, in this way, so that for several days, the ladies were in perpetual locomotion, expressing their wonder, and amusing the bystanders by their exclamations.

The young ladies, all of whom had correspondents in the country, did not fail to write magnificent accounts of all they saw, and old Mrs. Manford, on hearing them read, declared, "that if she had but known there'd been half such grand things,

she'd ha' left their John to take care of himself, that she would."

The count, who had hitherto, since his marriage with Miss Manford, been passively if not actively kind as a husband, and attentive, if staying at home can be called attention, now showed symptoms of a change of temperament. It seemed as if his unexpected good fortune, and consequent good feeding, had satisfied all his aspirations. His married life and his father-in-law's house had been his elysium, not a thought or a wish had he beyond it. But now the atmosphere of London set his original temperament at work,—it acted as a stimulus upon his dormant passions, and he not very unfrequently remained out late, and as frequently returned in a state, if not of positive inebriation, only one step removed from it. This did not excite any particular feelings of uneasiness amongst his lady inmates, and as his absence did not interfere with their indefatigable sight searching, they rarely troubled themselves about it; William, the footman, was a very sufficient conductor, and if the ladies did not appear to derive any material advantage, in point of elegance, they managed to spend "a power of money," as Mrs. Manford expressed herself, in making themselves "look like Londoners."

It may be questioned whether William or his mistresses enjoyed their shopping excursions the most. He was a shrewd and humorous fellow, who under a very civil and courteous demeanour towards the ladies, concealed a chuckling delight at all their outré "sayings and doings"—he was a footman "by trade," and had had a long town experience; and though his situation had seldom gone higher than the second-rate square people, his ideas of manners were terribly outraged by his present superiors. The Mansfords had indeed a notion, that

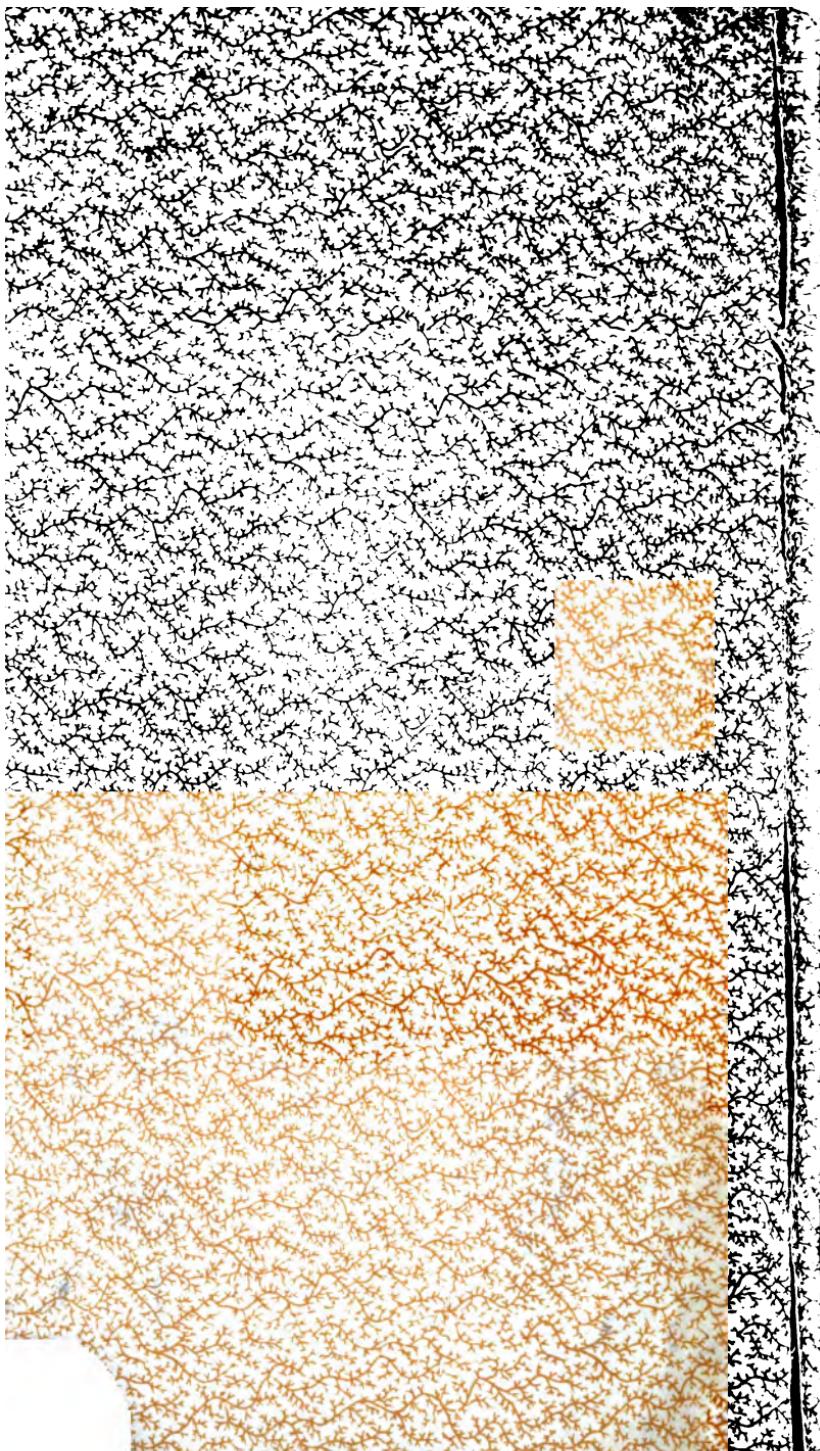
now and then there were some things they did not do like other people, and were in the habit of appealing to William on such occasions, so that before long—he was on a very familiar footing, and became a sort of Master of Ceremonies, in the frequent absence of his master. It is true, he was in the habit of indulging his fellows, at the fashionable lounging shops—with racy anecdotes sufficient to mantle their cheeks with smiles, and now and then to excite a well bred footman's laugh, at the expense of “the moneyed interest,” as he called the family—but as he contrived to exact a rich harvest from their inexperience, he never carried his indiscretions beyond a certain point—and so they passed unobserved by the parties, more immediately concerned. Indeed these had a very high opinion of him—and declared “that they should have been lost but for his services,” and “that he was a sight more knowing than their country footman,” indeed Mrs. Manford declared, “that he was as ‘cute as a Yorkshireman.”

Ladies at that period of our literary history, had hardly reached the knowledge of political economy, nevertheless, the uneducated and educated manufacturers had certain partialities on this head. Sir John Manford's titular elevation in society, and his vast profits during the continental war had made them thick and thin Tories. These were points which came home to their business and their bosoms, and “Billy Pitt,” as they affectionately styled the distinguished descendant of Chatham, was an especial object of their reverence. There was little imagination, little enthusiasm in their minds, neither could they be supposed to know any thing about the motives, or indeed the actions of this statesman; still these deficiencies in no way operated upon their regard. This led them to talk about other

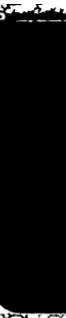
great men, and they were told that Westminster Abbey was the resting-place for many distinguished characters. Here, therefore, they determined to go, and they were delighted to learn from William, that the Abbey was a celebrated place, and that every body coming to London made a point of visiting it, and that they would have seen nothing, if they returned to Factory Hall without seeing Westminster Abbey.

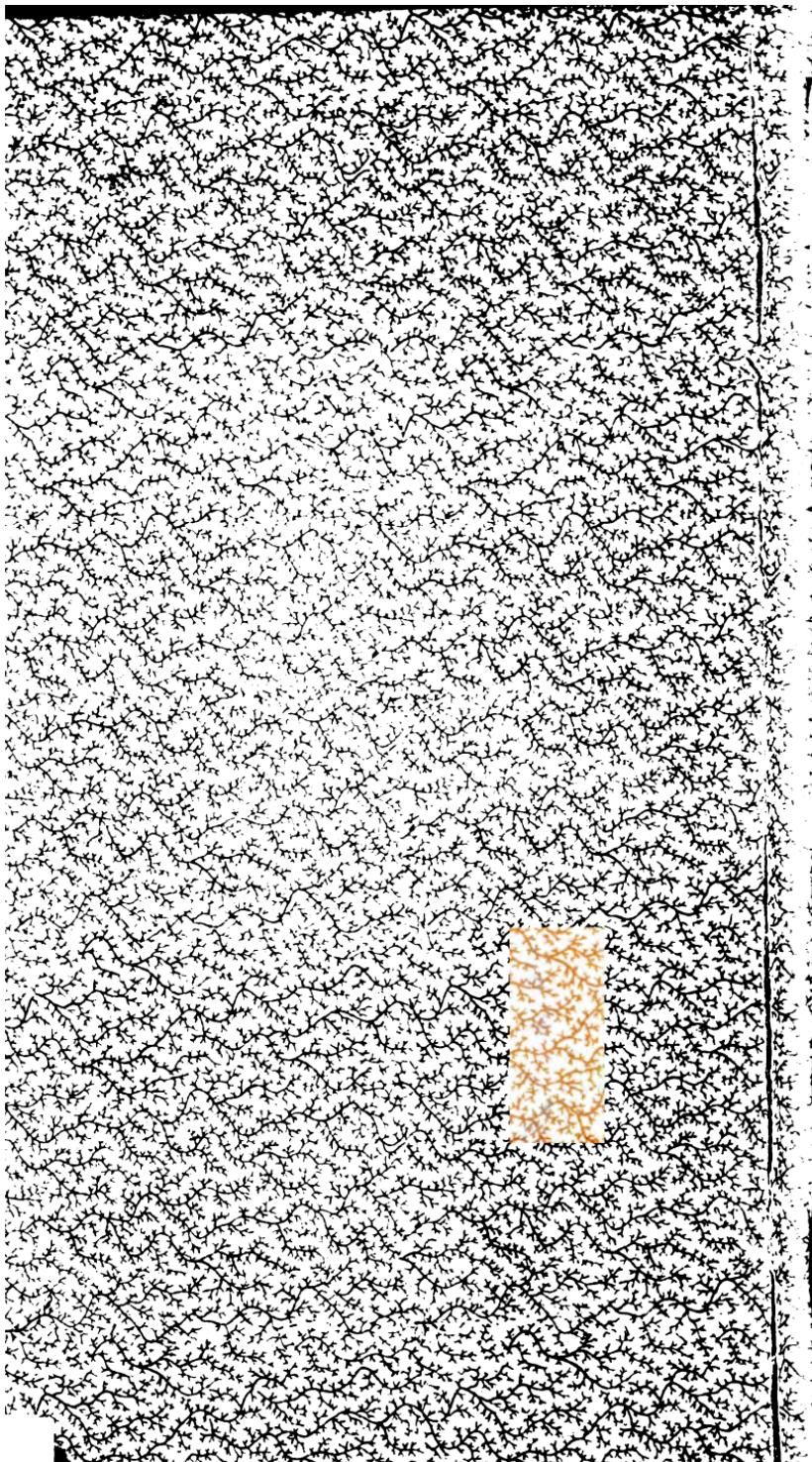
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